

MISS ANDERSON'S RIGHT HAND.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

CHAPTER VI.

THE taxidermist made his appearance in a few days. A very different looking man from the former occupant of the cabin by the lake. The hermit had worn long gray locks straggling down his neck, and a venerable beard. His garments, too, had been of primitive fashion—a long loose cloak of dark woollen cloth, a tunic of blue flannel belted about his waist, and a wide-brimmed straw hat, had usually been his attire when hovering around the banks of the lake, or strolling along the pastures.

Max Steinberg, as he gave his name, was not only a younger looking man, but of entirely different appearance. His short closely-cropped hair was glossy and black as the raven's wing. He wore a jetty mustache, and his brisk cheery manners were in as marked contrast to the shy retiring habits of the hapless hermit, as his jaunty shooting-costume and velvet skullcap were at variance with the former's costume.

"You are welcome to the cabin," said the owner of the lake pasture, with a smile, in answer to his application; "and I shall consider it a favor if you live there peaceably, and redeem the uncanny name the place has gotten."

"Parbleu!" answered the taxidermist, speaking with a foreign accent, and shrugging his shoulders, "I fear not molestation for myself. Who should wish to harm such a poor devil as me? and surely no robber could expect booty among my stuffed birds and reptiles! I take the place with thanks. Yet will I look up one strong lock for the door, and my good gun shall be charged always."

And whistling merrily he went his way to the cabin. He had it presently transformed into a cosy habitation. The board floor was covered with matting; one side was filled with tidy shelves, the other had two respectable engravings, one a scene on the Rhine, a village in the distance, which every one took to be the native place of the taxidermist, because the only time that his eye grew grave and wistful was when it

turned that way. It soon became a chosen resort for the villagers, especially the young people, who found the romantic walk fitly culminating in the bit of a room, swiftly filling up with interesting relics that no one else had dreamed of looking for. He had fitted a tree in one corner, and as fast as his specimens were obtained they were mounted upon it. There they were—looking, every one, so true to life it seemed any moment the heterogeneous flock might lift their wings and fly away—from the tiny humming-bird to the heron and crow, some in the attitude of flying, some pecking at the tiny wing, and others with open beak, just in the act of devouring a carefully preserved beetle, or a great gold-powdered moth. There was also a limb—the especial delight of the ladies—trimmed gayly with everlasting flowers and red rosebuds, on which fluttered every fairy-winged butterfly that had ever been seen in the place, and a great many more, indeed, than the oldest settlers suspected as regular summer visitors. The collection grew swiftly, and every day the attraction hither increased; for Herr Max, as he called himself once, and thereby set the example for all the rest, was always ready to give a welcoming smile; and it was a bitter disappointment, especially to the children, if they came thither and found the door locked, which happened frequently, since so much time was necessarily required in collecting his specimens. He found it out after a while, and had his hours, like any lawyer or physician, when he made it a duty to be ready for visitors. The owner of the cabin was especially delighted with him, and chuckled over his success in dissipating the horror which had enveloped the place. People forgot to shiver, even when they came down the pasture along the bank, in the very shadow of the white cross which marked the grave of the murdered hermit, and sometimes passed it by and never heeded it at all. Not, perhaps, without reason, for the taxidermist had planted a luxurious vine in the rich mould at its base, and carefully trained it to cover the arms of wood.

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Only on his own side, however; that which faced the lake gleamed out as white and startling in its boldness as at first.

Something like three weeks from the day of Mr. Atherton's dinner-party, the taxidermist might have been seen—while the early dew yet hung on the foliage, scattering its pearly shower over him as he brushed along—walking swiftly over the pastures, disappearing presently in the blue-green shadows of the cedar grove. He had his gun on his shoulder, his game-bag swung at his back, and the never-absent specimen box was buckled around his waist. Nevertheless, he paid no attention whatever to the stir of life amidst the waving branches, the clear joyous call of birds, the whirr of insect, or the flutter of broad-winged butterfly taking its morning sip from the freshly-opened flowers. With eyes downcast, and lips set gravely and thoughtfully, he strode on until he reached a little cluster of pines standing on a rise of land overlooking the Creyton farm. Here he paused, leaned against the trunk of a tree, and eyed sharply the open pasture before him, across which ran the footpath worn by Charlie Creyton and his young apprentice, as they went to and fro from the farmhouse to the shop.

The village was hidden, nestled in the valley below, and there were but three other farmhouses in sight, from whose chimneys the white columns of smoke curled upward in snowy wreaths. The taxidermist looked long and wistfully toward the brown roof of Creyton farmhouse, and sighed more than once, with none of that cheery brightness on his face which the townspeople seemed to think its inseparable trait.

Presently his eye caught a glimpse of two figures coming through the barnyard gate, He knew Charlie Creyton's straight vigorous form even at that distance, and guessed that the short stout boy lagging behind was the apprentice. He watched them along the pasture, half smiled as Charlie vaulted over the bars; and when they had disappeared from sight he drew a long sigh of relief.

"They have gone," said he, aloud. And shouldering his gun, he went swiftly forward toward the farmhouse, passing around the barn, and making a good deal of noise as he opened and closed the barnyard gate.

Mary Creyton, in her neat calico dress and spotless collar, her smooth glossy hair

and meek pensive face, came to the open door and looked out. The taxidermist set his gun against the gate-post, swept off his skullcap in a respectful bow, and came forward.

"I have been wandering in the woods, and am faint. Might I be so bold as to ask for a glass of milk?" said he.

Mary Creyton's eye had taken a swift inventory of his person. "The taxidermist who draws so many visitors to the cabin, without doubt," commented she; and answered aloud, in her sweet steady tones:

"Certainly. I can give you coffee, if you prefer. My son has just taken his breakfast and gone to the village. Walk in, please."

He threw off his game-bag and came in at once, glancing around the neat inviting kitchen, almost feeling a pang at its cheery home-look.

"I beg you not to allow me to intrude. I stop myself but a short mile from here," said he, sitting down in a chair, and trying to steady his brain from the whirl of agitating thoughts which rushed upon him.

"Yes," answered Mary Creyton, "I knew you at once. You are quite famous in the place, so that one might recognize you without ever having seen you before. I hear wonderful stories of your birds and butterflies. I am quite proud of the honor of this visit. You must really allow me to give you a breakfast."

As she spoke she went quietly to and fro, dusting the crumbs from the snowy tablecloth, setting the coffee-pot over the fire, and peeping once or twice into the oven. The taxidermist followed every movement, although he seemed absorbed in the landscape spread out from the window before him. She went out of the room, to a little milk-room in the rear, and he heard her serene voice in conversation with the girl at work there over the butter.

As he listened, this man who called himself Max Steinberg brushed his hand across his eyes, and two scalding tears fell upon his cheek. The hospitable woman returned with a bowl of cream and a tiny pat of fresh butter, set a plate at the table, clinked a silver spoon into the cup and saucer, and turned to him, her blue eyes lighted up with pleasant enjoyment at the novelty of the occasion.

"I am so glad I baked chicken pie for Charlie to carry for his dinner. Now I

have one all ready for his breakfast. Come and sit down now."

The man could scarcely refrain from falling down at her feet, but he rose, stumbled forward, and managed to get into his seat, for all his blinded eyes.

"You are too generous, madam. Do you serve every vagabond who comes along in this style?" said he.

She laughed cheerfully.

"The vagabonds do not come this way, nor care for milk or coffee. They go to the village bar and ask for poison. Shall I give you the cream? or perhaps you will prefer to pour it yourself."

"No, O no! Let me have it all from your hands. You may well imagine what a treat it must be, this orderly breakfast, and dainty-laden table, with a neat-handed lady to preside. We men are such bunglers, at our best."

"Yet I hear about the admirable neatness and graceful arrangement of your cabin. Let me help you to one of these roasted potatoes. Charlie always wants them in their jackets."

She helped him bountifully, and went away for an extra addition of jelly. While she was lost in the depths of the closet, her guest dropped knife and fork, and stared about him like one in a dream. Nevertheless, he did justice to the meal. He took care for that, knowing it was best reward for her kindness. But at length he turned away from the table, and, despite his best efforts, his voice was husky as he asked:

"Are we safe from intrusion, kind lady? I have a word for your ear."

Mary Creyton arched her neck, and looked at him as haughtily as it was possible for one of her meek spirit.

"Sir!" said she, making a movement toward the door.

He flung out a deprecating gesture.

"Wait a moment, I pray you. I was in California a long while—I was the intimate friend of George Livingstone. He told me to seek you out—to give you a message."

It needed no more to detain her. Mary Creyton sank down in the nearest chair, and turned her blue eyes upon him, wild with anguish and grief.

"I heard his story. I came here prepared to be angry and harsh in my rebuke, but, madam, you have disarmed me. There is a cruel mistake; it is not in your nature to be so hard and pitiless with him."

"Hard and pitiless?" echoed Mary's indignant voice; and then she fell into a wild burst of weeping. Her companion trembled from head to feet, sharing her distress and grief.

"I found, to my surprise, that you had even ignored his name; that no one in the town seemed to know of your relation to him. Everything, in fact, is so different from what he imagined, that I am puzzled."

"You knew him—you were with him!" wailed Mary Creyton. "O, did he never repent his cruel desertion of the mother of his child? Did he send me no repentant word—no message of tenderness to the one who gave him her whole heart—who bore uncomplainingly the scorn and contempt of the world for his sake—for his sake? Had he no love left?"

"Good heavens! madam, if ever there was a man whose whole heart went out to a woman, it was George Livingstone!"

She wrung her hands, and her wet eyes flashed.

"Look at the circumstances. See me here, dishonored in the sight of the world. Look at my boy, who dreams not of his father's identity, and dare to tell me that!"

"Madam," said the taxidermist, in a stern wrathful voice, "there's been devil's mischief made between you two. I guessed it before. I tell you a truer-hearted, more passionately loving husband than George Livingstone never breathed. He wept his tears of anguish at your very name. Of all the rest of his miserable experience this only had power to stab to his heart—that the woman he adored turned away from him in scorn, refusing to share his exile, to soothe his sorrows."

"Turned away from him!" repeated Mary Creyton, slowly; "why do you mock me?"

"Let us talk no more thus blindly. I can tell you just what diabolical toils wound around him, for he told me everything. It was a secret, his union with you, because his uncle favored another girl, and he wanted time to bring him around. He acknowledged with bitter remorse that there was his first, but, he declared, his only wrong to you. Yet he meant it kindly. He was sure he could trust to his uncle's generous kindness, if only he was able to convince him of the folly of the other alliance. And some one who feigned the truest friendship urged him on. There came the woeful

quarrel with young Raymond, who was desperately jealous of poor George, and who insulted him in every way that opportunity allowed him. It seemed he had followed George, and witnessed your frequent meetings. George was sure that he suspected the truth, and was stung to frenzy by it. Raymond did his best to bring on a quarrel, but only when he flung out hints against you, succeeded into goading the poor fellow into turning. Well, that miserable day came. Raymond was more unbearable than ever, and George, in a towering passion, turned upon him, and uttered those threats, before half a dozen witnesses, which were used afterward as such potent weapons against him.

"Do you know the rest? I find utter ignorance in the town; no one seems aware that it was Raymond's death which sent George Livingstone away—a murderer and a vagabond on the earth."

"I know—do I not know?" groaned Mary; "was it not that the terrible story might be hidden forever that I consented to endure this shame—to forego my claim? I promised her that no one should dream that George Livingstone was father to the child that was soon to be born into such a cloud of misery, if only his father might go free of this woeful crime—if he might be spared the judgment of the law."

"Ha! I thought so!" exclaimed her listener, springing to his feet; "poor George! poor George! The same devil's agent came to both. Listen to me. George Livingstone was guiltless of Raymond's blood. The hot-headed boy fell by his own rash fury. He struck at George, there in the woods, with the butt of his gun, forgetful that it was charged, and dropped dead at his rival's feet, shot by the ball from his own gun."

Mary Creyton stretched both hands upward, while the hot tears poured over her face.

"My God, I thank thee!"

"Hear me still further. That same fiend was at hand, rushed forward lamenting the youth, and accusing George of having murdered him. His indignant refutation was met by the scathing declaration that nothing would make the world believe it. That she herself had been drawn hither by the angry voices, his threats, the peculiar relation between them, all would be black proofs which no one could disbelieve. Stun-

ned and bewildered, George took the evil advice. He hurried away, only meaning to remain until the worst had blown over, and then to return and confess everything to his uncle, and take you before the world as his wife. He dashed off a frantic hasty letter, and gave it to those crafty hands for delivery. Speedy answer came to his hiding-place; a letter, in your handwriting, which drove him to madness. You heaped pitiless burning reproaches upon him; you refused to hear another word, or take another look from one who had become abhorrent, detestable, hideous in your eyes. Be still, dear madam; I know you never wrote it. O, if poor George could have believed it! It was managed with the wily skill of a Lucifer. Stung to madness, George took the first ship for California. Yet with coolness came the desperate hope of your relenting. He wrote twice, six times in all, at different intervals, but never, never a word came back from you. She wrote several times, with hypocritical professions of sympathy and friendship, representing you as hard and obdurate, and his uncle severely angry. What wonder the poor fellow dove deeper into the wild sierras, and, goaded by the restless anguish within, made no pause until he was familiar even with the most unfrequented peaks of the Rockies?"

Mary Creyton had risen from her chair, and stood before him like a stony statue, but for the wild agonized eyes never losing a single expression of his face.

"And he is dead now?" moaned she, with white shivering lips. "He died in those far-off wilds."

"That is another lie. She concocted the whole; the letter was of her own devising. O that she-wolf! I tell you he came back, poor weary-hearted man, pining but for a glimpse of your face, he came back. Hist you! you know about the hermit? Mary Creyton, that hermit was George Livingstone! Now answer me, who murdered him?"

The wild, fierce, flaming look was lost on Mary. The glazing eyes saw nothing, but the words he spoke hissed and shrieked into her ears, turning her dizzy and faint. She dropped down into a chair, and her head fell forward to the table. The taxidermist poured out a glass of water and gave it to her drop by drop, with shaking hands and terrified face. She revived presently, and burst into a relieving flood of tears.

"O my George! my martyred George!" sobbed she.

"Yes, that is my cry day and night. Woman, he was the dearest friend the world gave to the poor taxidermist. We roamed together over those wondrous sierras. We hunted up the manifold riches and mysteries of that golden shore. We shared each other's thoughts and woes. Why am I here? Because, on my bended knees, I took an oath to avenge his wrongs, to right his good name, to punish the pitiless hand which haunted him even to death."

The man's broad chest heaved, his eyes flashed, though the tears poured down his cheeks. Mary Creyton stretched out her hands to him.

"God bless you! O, if I had known that he was so near! if he had only come to me! O horrible torturing thought!"

"But not so hard to bear as what you believed before. Tell me that, or I shall repent this revelation. You thought him a murderer, a reckless deserter of all that should hold sacred to man. You believed him dead and buried in far California. Is it worse to know that he is innocent, and sleeping beneath the cross yonder by the lake?"

"No, no. You have lifted away the heaviest woe. I can tell my boy of his father now, and never blush. I say again, God bless you!"

"And you will keep silence, and give me help if I should need it?"

"I will," she answered, solemnly.

At that moment the girl was heard approaching from the milk-room. The taxidermist rose hastily, made a respectful bow, and retreated.

CHAPTER VII.

A FEW days afterwards there was quite an aristocratic party at the taxidermist's cabin. Miss Anderson had city visitors, and they had expressed a wish to see the romantic spot, and the good-natured hero of the town. They were rowed across in a gilded pleasure-boat, and landing, found a group of young people collected around the cabin door.

Conspicuous among them, as, indeed, he always was wherever he went, was Ray Dexter. Miss Anderson beckoned to him, and he was proud to obey the summons, and transfer himself from the ordinary group

of townspeople, to the elegant circle of aristocracy. Yet Miss Anderson's penetrating eye saw a cloud on his forehead, and was not unmindful of the tiny pout on Amy Atherton's pretty lip.

The taxidermist stood in his doorway, and bowed his acknowledgment of the honor vouchsafed to his humble dwelling. Miss Anderson scarcely looked at him, and indeed seemed a little nervous and anxious to avoid any direct encounter with the taxidermist. For while the others entered and admired the fine collection, going into raptures over delicately-tinted butterfly and fairy humming-bird, their stately hostess lingered on the bank, gathering up her trailing skirts from the grass, and swinging the costly Parisian toy which served her for a sunshade. She drew Ray Dexter aside, and asked, earnestly:

"What is the trouble between you and Amy, Ray? I see there is a cloud."

Ray curled his lips.

"The young lady chooses to be capricious. I will not coax her, but let her play her game out. I fancy she is a little ashamed already."

"I do not understand you. Is it a mere lovers' quarrel? Somehow, there is a defiant look on her face which I do not like."

While she spoke, her eye wandered to a group of young girls among whom Amy stood. At that moment Charlie Creyton came to view, turning the row of alder bushes which fringed the banks.

Amy saw him, and almost unconsciously to herself, a glad light flashed into her eyes, a rich warm glow broke over her face. She was in the mood to betray the sentiment, and walked to meet him, with a proud defiant glance backward toward Ray Dexter.

The latter bit his lip. His vanity was most susceptible of any sentiment.

"Confound that baseborn meddler!" muttered he.

Miss Anderson swept a scathing glance toward the pair.

"Do you mean that she has any thought of him?" exclaimed she, in a tone of intense concentrated wrath.

Ray could not bear to acknowledge to Miss Anderson, of all others, the mortifying repulse his suit had met.

"He is trying his best, at all events," answered he, with an attempt at carelessness.

The hand, daintily gloved in pale primrose, was clenched so wrathfully that the

delicate kid split the whole length of the palm. She held up the hand—it was her right—and glowered at it a moment with a lurid look in her black eyes, which made even Ray Dexter shrink. Then with a contemptuous laugh, she tore it off, and flung the glove over the bank into the water; after which, she walked deliberately across the open space between them, and took Amy's hand in hers.

"Come, my little Amy," said she; "why are you wasting your sweet presence in this desert?"

The freezing contemptuous glance fell upon Charlie Creyton, yet seemed to ignore his presence. Amy did not move.

There was a little closer compression of Miss Anderson's scarlet lips, an icier gleam of the chilly eye, and then she spoke in a tone of grave authority.

"Come over to your proper sphere, child. Do you not know a woman who stoops is undone?"

It was Charlie's eye which flashed now. Her meaning could not be mistaken, and it sent the hot blood tingling through his veins. He clenched his hand in impotent wrath. It was a woman, and there was no redress; but woe unto the man who had dared to stand within reach of that brawny arm, and stab such a thrust!

Amy's loyal heart sent the angry blood seething into her cheek. She dropped a ceremonious courtesy.

"I beg you to excuse me, Miss Anderson, especially as you have such good company yonder. Charlie dear, I want you to show me that crow's nest you told me about."

And facing around, with her back rudely to the great lady, brave little Amy slipped her hand into Charlie Creyton's arm, and said:

"Come, Charlie, I never enjoy walks with other people as I do with you."

Miss Anderson stood a moment gnawing viciously at her under lip, then walked slowly back toward the cabin. Amy, trembling in every limb with angry excitement, drew Charlie away toward the bank, and glanced furtively at his face. It was a little paler than usual, and filled with wistful sadness.

"Amy," exclaimed he, passionately, "my brave, generous little Amy, is it true that I shall drag you down? Sooner would I take my place here in this gory grave under the cross. It would kill me to know you would have to bear many such thrusts as

that for my sake. Have I been selfish and ungenerous?"

"Nonsense, Charlie," returned Amy, the tears coming to her eyes. "Don't mind that disagreeable, haughty, authoritative woman. 'She is bound up in Ray Dexter, and he's been telling tales, I suppose. I don't see why she don't marry him herself. I never knew she was quite so hateful.'"

"I understand her allusions," repeated Charlie, his broad chest heaving; "but if a man does his best, and bears bravely what he cannot help—"

"Your worst is better than Ray Dexter's best. Don't think any more about it. I tell you I am proud of your love; that I will not give it up for forty fortunes," interrupted Amy, impetuously.

"My own precious Amy! No, no, you will not repent. In the sight of Heaven I feel myself able to make you glad and happy, to cherish you with the fondest and most watchful care! O Amy, I *will* make you happy."

"Of course you will. Have I not perceptions of my own? Do I not have good reasons for admiring your chivalrous, generous cherishing of your mother? Think of her trials, and see what a cheerful serene face she wears for all its sadness of the past. Then look at my poor, worried, tortured, burden-bound mother, with her worn aged face. Do I not see wherein lies the difference? Charlie Creyton, I choose to be your loving happy wife, and no other man's cowering slave. And now consider the question settled; I told Ray Dexter the same yesterday. I am going to let all the world see that I prefer you above any other. I want you to tell your mother of it."

"And your father?" queried Charlie.

Amy caught her breath a little nervously, but returned, stoutly:

"Yes, and my father. I meant to tell him this morning, but he was in a savage humor, and poor mother looked so frightened and distressed, I let him go away from the breakfast-table without saying a word. I have despised myself for a coward ever since."

"You are no coward. You are the bravest, dearest, sweetest little heroine—"

"Now, Charlie, you needn't be foolish." And Amy's grave face was dimpling again in smiles.

Over beneath the tall oak before the cabin door, Miss Anderson was furtively watch-

ing them, her face growing grimmer and darker. She cleared it, however, with a careless smile, as the gay party came fluttering from the cabin.

"O Miss Anderson, why don't you come in and see? He is such an agreeable man, your taxidermist, and the collection is really a treasure. But I dare say you have visited him a great many times."

Miss Anderson did not contradict the assertion. The party of townspeople were also taking leave. Among them was Mr. Bradley the coroner. As she saw him, a sudden spark leaped into Miss Anderson's eye. She glanced again at the couple in the distance, and a cold sneer flitted across her lip.

Slowly, and evidently with the utmost carelessness, she sauntered to the cabin door, and glanced within. The taxidermist was stooping over a hawk he had been mounting. Miss Anderson began poking with the ivory tip of her sunshade in the dust before the cabin door, when Mr. Bradley answered her nod of recognition, by coming to her side.

They talked some little time on casual themes, and while she talked, the lady drew idle figures on the ground with the sunshade. Presently she moved a little nearer the door, and more to the right of the building, running her novel pencil in wavy lines, to make a vine. From out the little crevice the ivory nib flourished a little strip of tinkling metal, and flung it almost to the feet of the coroner.

Alert and watchful always, and especially at this place, Mr. Bradley darted upon it.

"Why, what is it?" questioned Miss Anderson, with a clear rich laugh.

It was a narrow strip of German silver, with a little fine tracework for border, and two neat holes for screws. There were also letters, initials, rudely traced with some pointed instrument, but clear and distinct, "C. C.," below the words "Colt's patent," and the number "61,230" stamped evidently with a branding iron.

"It looks like the marking-plate of a cane or umbrella," observed the lady, indifferently. "How long has it lain there, I wonder?"

"It is the marking-plate from a pistol," answered the coroner, in a suddenly fierce tone, "and it has lain there unnoticed, since the night of the hermit's murder."

Miss Anderson turned her horrified eyes upon him.

"You don't mean it! O, how you frighten me, Mr. Bradley. And to think I should have discovered it."

"It is a providential revelation!" said the coroner, solemnly. "Now we are likely to get at something we can follow; 61,230. To find a pistol with the other portions bearing that number."

"What were the initials?" asked Miss Anderson, peering fearfully into the hand which still held the fatal evidence.

"'C. C.' They are a little peculiar," added she.

Mr. Bradley groaned.

"O—Charlie Creyton! Charlie Creyton!"

"Good heavens! you don't suspect any one in the town?" whispered Miss Anderson.

"I am forgetting myself!" said Mr. Bradley, recovering his wits. "I have no right to call names on mere suspicion."

"I should be sorry to think it was he, though I am very angry with him," went on Miss Anderson, musingly. "It is really unprincipled and wicked in him to try to cajole and win over a simple innocent girl like Amy. But then poor Squire Ned's will threw the snare around her. Yet he knows the bitter opposition of her friends, that she is really engaged to another. O, it is shocking, such early depravity. Mr. Bradley," added she, suddenly waking up from her abstracted manner, "don't follow up the clue. And O, don't bring my poor little innocent sunshade into the affair."

While she spoke, she moved a step away, and transferred the silk and ivory toy from the right hand, which had held and guided it to its important discovery, to the other whose dainty glove was still intact.

Once again she stretched out the slender delicate member, and stood looking down upon it with that same singular glowering, that eerie mingling of exulting pride and icy horror. Then she joined the group gathered before the cross. Her visitors were hearing for the first time the story of the murder.

The taxidermist came out, and hovered in the rear. His voice made them all start, when he broke in upon their conversation.

"It's a little singular and odd coincidence, that the vine I planted to cover the cross, will only grow on this side. Do you see, not one leaf or tendrill creeps over the side toward the lake?"

All went round to examine, even Miss Anderson, and she placed herself on a direct

line from the cross to the distant windows of Lakeville, glanced from one to the other, and flung out that white shapely right hand, a-glitter with diamonds and rubies, with a nervous shudder, as if to cast it from her.

But she was quite herself when she drew Ray Dexter aside, as the remainder of the party were seating themselves in the boat, and demanded of him exactly what Amy Atherton had said to him.

Ray was terribly loath to answer, but the imperious eye held him, and he told the truth.

Amy had declared that she loved Charlie Creyton, and meant to marry him.

Miss Anderson laughed contemptuously.

"She is a little fool. Nevertheless, Ray, you shall marry her," said she, and walked majestically into the boat, shook out her fleecy skirts, spread her sunshade, and entertained her visitors by her brilliant spirits all the way across the lake.

Meantime Ray Dexter, thoroughly disturbed from his usual complacency, walked slowly back from the boat-landing toward the group of young people waiting for Amy Atherton, who still lingered in the background, talking earnestly with Charlie Creyton.

"Go and bring Amy here, Mr. Dexter," said a laughing maiden. "Tell her we are going home, and shall leave her to walk alone if she keeps us waiting much longer."

Ray shrugged his shoulders.

"If she chooses such company, leave her to enjoy it. For myself I am not over-particular, but I really cannot stoop so low as this."

"Amy, Amy!" called out Fanny Drake, a pert giddy maiden, secretly a warm admirer of Ray Dexter, and a fervent aspirant for a place in Miss Anderson's coterie.

And as Amy and her companion moved slowly toward them, she added, with a toss of her foolish head:

"It's all Amy's fault that we have that cabinet-maker at our heels. I, for one, protest against it."

"Why, Fanny," retorted a generous companion, "you know that Charlie Creyton gains every one's respect wherever he goes."

"I side with you, Fanny," exclaimed Ray, raising his voice as Charlie and Amy advanced, so that he knew very well they must hear his words. "I agree with you entirely that there is a limit to all things, and that we owe it to ourselves to keep out all un-

worthy, baseborn interlopers from our circle. If Amy must choose such a companion, let us leave her to walk her way alone."

As he spoke, he put himself by Fanny's side, and led the way swiftly in the path toward the village. Fanny was only too flattered and delighted. She gave an imperious gesture to her younger sister, who followed with her escort. The rest hesitated a moment, and looked at each other dubiously. They were sorry to grieve Charlie Creyton, but not yet ready to incur the displeasure of Ray, the lion of the young men, the favored guest of the great house at Lakeville. They stood vacillating a moment, then followed after Ray and Fanny.

Ray cast back a triumphant glance, and exulted inwardly.

"Miss Amy is well punished. I fancy she will be less capricious when I see her again."

Amy stood a moment, following them with angry indignant eyes, hardly daring to glance into her companion's face, for she knew he comprehended the whole movement.

His face was deadly pale, and his eyes flashed, but he spoke sorrowfully:

"O Amy, this is but the beginning. Do not go any further until you have counted the cost."

"I do not care for them. I despise and detest them!" cried out Amy, vehemently. "If all the world stood on their side, and you were here alone, I should stay with you."

"Heaven bless your generous heart! O Amy, may you receive such a reward as you deserve. For myself, their shafts fall harmlessly. I can throw them off as I would a child's pelting arrow. I will go with you to the road. As soon as you have spoken to your father, I want to take you to my mother. My darling! if only I might but save you from the trial of that interview, when you must brave, I fear, the most bitter anger."

"I am able to bear it," answered Amy, "and I have the consolation of knowing that my mother's blessing follows me. But it may not prove so grave an ordeal as we anticipate. You know how terribly alarmed I was about my apron. It has all blown over, though I never hear any allusion to the fatal affair without feeling as if my face betrayed the most palpable guilt."

"Yes, I suppose it is all ended, though I

cannot understand it. I certainly wonder that more active measures have not been taken. It is a terrible mystery. I get bewildered trying to fathom it—to detect a motive.”

“Don’t talk about it, pray. I don’t allow

myself to think of it. I am only thankful that the excitement has died out.”

Little dreamed either how speedily and threateningly the revival of that excitement was coming.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MISS CHICK'S FORTUNE.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

"DELY," said Miss Chick, all in a flutter of delight, "go right down to Aunt Mimy's, and tell her I want her to come up here right away. And go across the fields, too, for I don't want people spyin' and talkin' about my affairs. Not that everybody—even Miss Deacon Clark—don't go to Aunt Mimy to see what the cards says when they want to know particularly what's goin' to happen to 'em; but they all go on the sly, and look dreadful plous and disapprovin' if fortin-tellin' is mentioned, even. Mind you keep your mouth shet on the subject, miss, or you'll be sorry that you didn't. 'Tis queer about that gentleman. He told Joe that he didn't like the place very well, the frogs in the pond was too musical; but as soon as he saw me, and found out that I was a single lady, he changed his mind at once."

"Shall I go before I finish washing the floor?" asked Delia, meekly. There was a little gleam of fun in her sad brown eyes, and the corners of her mouth twitched strangely.

"Yes, go now. The floor wont hurt, if you're spry. Of course, under the circumstances I feel in somethin' of a hurry. But you don't know nothin' about it, Dely, you never had a lover; and with that mop of red hair, and not a penny to your name, I don't know as you ever will, unless you hev an old widower who has so many children that he can't find anybody else. I hate children. They don't hev the least feelin'

for your best carpets, and eat till you feel like faintin' away. Mr. Stone is a bachelor; he told me so. Young girls always feel like knowin' their fate under such circumstances, though it's almost certain. It's very romantic, and there's lots of songs 'bout fortin-tellers and love."

Delia turned her head to hide a smile, and made haste to do her mistress's bidding. She was a pretty girl, just entering her seventeenth summer. Indeed, I think you would have called her a beauty, but for the weary look which clouded her face. Her eyes were as sweet and expressive as those of the Madonna. Her complexion was fair and delicate as a roseleaf; her features were fine and highbred, and her hair of that rich golden hue which the old painters loved so well.

Aunt Mimy was standing in the door of her cottage, anxiously counting a flock of speckled chickens that were forlornly new to the world, and were declaring over and over again that they didn't like it in the shrillest of voices.

"Miss Chick would like to have you come over to her house as soon as you can, Aunt Mimy," said Delia, smiling a little in spite of herself.

"Humph!" said Aunt Mimy, still attentive to her chickens. "Wonder if she thinks she's going to get married now? for it's the fortieth time she's had her hopes raised; and I shouldn't be surprised if she did succeed this time. Funny, aint it?"

And the shrewd, good-natured-looking old woman shook her fat sides with laughter. "I told her I'd influence the Fates to send her a husband, and so I did. Tell her I'll come up in less than no time."

Dely opened wide her wondering brown eyes, and turned silently homeward. On her way she pondered on Aunt Mimy's words. Had she seen the stranger?—and if she had, could she imagine for one moment that he would marry Miss Chick—that elegant, aristocratic-looking gentleman, so polished in his manners, so refined in his speech, and certainly as much as ten years younger than the lady in question? Dely did not believe in cards or Aunt Mimy's gift of prophecy, but she certainly was a shrewd old woman, and kept her eyes open so that nothing escaped her vision. If a stranger appeared in town, she not only knew of his or her arrival before any one else, but she managed in some way to find out the names, and something of the history of new-comers, in the most mysterious manner. Aunt Mimy belonged to an old family which was well respected in town, and her husband, a poor, bed-ridden old man, belonged to the Presbyterian church. She had once been invited to the minister's to tea with the best of the village people, though she had always been called odd and queer, but since she had taken to fortune-telling as a means to keep the wolf from her door, of course she had been shunned and forsaken by her neighbors, and only romantic young girls, anxious old maids, and a few superstitious matrons, ever darkened her doors. But Della could not help feeling a sort of faith in her—not in her fortunes, but in herself. She looked so shrewd and intelligent, she seemed so kind and sincere, and so merry and contented in spite of her fallen fortunes.

"I don't pretend to say that what I tell you is true. I read the cards just as they are, and that is all I know," she was continually saying.

But, strange as it seemed, her predictions were usually verified, and no young girl ever went to her without a wildly-beating heart.

Miss Chick was not sufficiently composed in her mind to take any work into her hands, but stood in the portico anxiously watching for Aunt Mimy's appearance; and it was not long before she came, carrying a mysterious-looking black satchel and

a solemn prophetic face. Miss Chick commenced to tremble. Aunt Mimy's solemnity deepened.

"I shall have to ask you into the kitchen, Aunt Mimy. It's the only place where nobody's likely to be peekin'. Mary Ann is clearing my bedrooms, and Joe's gone to Slatersville. Of course we don't mind Dely. She can do up her work here just as well. Some of the neighbors might disturb us in the front part of the house, and Mary Ann would listen up stairs."

Aunt Mimy silently took off her bonnet, and produced a pack of cards from the mysterious satchel.

"It's a trying moment to young folks when they're about to hear their destiny read to them. I'm all of a tremble." And the gushing maiden of forty-five pressed her hand against her fluttering heart.

"Wish," said Aunt Mimy, shuffling the cards.

Miss Chick rolled her eyes toward heaven, as if her wish were connected with the angels.

"Cut," said Aunt Mimy, in a solemn whisper.

Miss Chick did as she was bidden, and the king of diamonds appeared in view with a suspiciously tender look in his face.

"Ah!" said Aunt Mimy, "a stranger is coming to this house; and when he goes away he'll take his bride with him," she added, after a little inspection of the cards.

Miss Chick simpered, and held her blushing face in her hands.

"He will make his appearance in less than a week's time," continued Aunt Mimy. Then she described his personal appearance, and, as Miss Chick afterward declared, it was just as if she were looking at Mr. Stone. She told how deep and how full his purse was, and what a fine house he owned in the city. She wasn't able to tell just what city it was, but she thought it was in another State.

"Well, I declare, Miss Chick! you are going to meet with a disappointment, but it's nothing that you won't get right over, and you'll hardly remember it at all after you are married; and you are certainly going to be married before this year is out."

Miss Chick's face, which had darkened with sudden clouds, grew radiant again.

"Can't you tell just when it's goin' to be?" she asked, beaming upon Aunt Mimy with sweet anxiety.

Aunt Mimy shook her head. "Perhaps the next cut will tell," said she.

Miss Chick proceeded to cut again, touching the cards as she would have touched something which she suspected of containing fire or poison, or some mysterious charm which might destroy her.

This time the king of hearts appeared, looking with much meaning into the lady's eager face.

"Well, I declare! if there isn't another strange gentleman coming close on the heels of the first!" said Aunt Mimy, hastily examining the cards in his neighborhood; "and what is stranger, it looks as if he was going to take a bride from this house, too. He aint quite so handsome, or so rich, or so young as the first one, but he'll make a comfortable partner; and whoever he asks had better not refuse him. It looks as if he were a minister. Anyway, he has something to do with preachin'; and just as true as I sit in this chair, he'll marry somebody in this house."

"Why, it can't be," said Miss Chick. "I can't marry two, of course, and there's nobody else here, and wont be, unless I might have other summer boarders; and I don't think I shall take any ladies this year."

"Why, aint Dely here, and aint she goin' to be here all summer?"

"O, Dely!" said Miss Chick, with a little scornful toss of her head. "'Tisn't at all likely that anybody'll marry her."

"Don't be so sure of that!" said Aunt Mimy, hastily. "Anyway, there will soon be two weddings, closely connected with persons in this house, and you are going to be one of the brides, Miss Chick."

Delia bent her head very low over her work, but she was blushing up to the roots of her hair. Miss Chick did not heed it. She was too eager to hear the remainder of her fortune, to know where she was going to live, and all that sort of thing.

She seemed to be more than satisfied with what Fate had in store for her, and was willing to pay for the words that came so mysteriously quite liberally. Aunt Mimy opened her eyes with surprise, for Miss Chick was called very close; and from her former dealings with that lady, she had no reason to doubt the truth of the statement.

"I don't s'pose I shall be here takin' summer boarders next year, and I've a good mind to get a new set of furniture for Mr. Stone's chamber," said the lady of the

house the next day. "He wont hurt it none, certainly; and if I never hev no more boarders, 'twont get worn out so that I couldn't sell to advantage when I wanted to do so. That dark pine set don't look just the thing for a gentleman like him, so I bleeve I shall go to town to-day, and get a new one home as soon as possible. You see that Mary Ann don't idle any while I'm gone, Dely, and be sure not to let Joe get into that pan of doughnuts; there wont be one of them left if he does. And mind that you get them sheets every one turned, and my new pink wrapper done by the time I get home."

"If I can," said Della, with a little sigh.

"If you can!" echoed Miss Chick. "You can, and you must. How you would like to loaf your time away, and play on my melodeon like a fine lady, wouldn't you? And I s'pose you do as soon as my back is turned on you. I never saw such an ungrateful piece, when you would have gone into the poorhouse if it hadn't been for me!"

Delia was silent; and after giving various other directions, Miss Chick set out for the city. Afternoon came. Delia had hurried to finish the sheets with all her might, and the wrapper which was to adorn the lovely form of her mistress was so far toward completion that she dared to put it aside for two or three blessed minutes. Delia was very fond of music, and though all untaught, was a real musician. Music soothed her when she was sad, rested her when she was weary, and inspired new hope in her breast when she was hopeless. Miss Chick's melodeon wasn't the most tuneful of instruments, but in her few leisure moments, when her mistress was out indulging in a little gossip with her neighbors, Delia had taught herself to play upon it snatches of little airs and accompaniments to songs. Miss Chick discovered her accomplishment in time, but did not frown upon it as she feared she would do, for in those days Deacon Clark, who was a widower with eight children, came to see the lady on Sunday nights, and always asked her to join him in singing "Come, ye disconsolate." She had never learned to play herself, and it was quite desirable that some one should play an accompaniment to the enlivening hymn; so Delia was brought into service, and played for them night after night. But at last the deacon concluded that the Widow Bates would make him a better companion

through this vale of tears than Miss Chick, though Miss Chick sang "Come, ye disconsolate" with twice the vim. Now-a-days Delia had rarely ever a moment to devote to the instrument, and Miss Chick seemed to hate the very sound of it. Perhaps its music brought back the ghosts of dead hopes. But to-day an old song which her mother used to sing to her was floating into the girl's ears, and she stole away from her work just for one moment and sang it, accompanying herself with a few soft broken chords. The tears came into her eyes as she did so, and her voice, the sweetest voice in the world, trembled with emotion. Poor Delia! she was so alone in the world, so friendless, so forlorn.

While she was singing, she became suddenly conscious of a presence in the room, and looking quickly around, discovered Mr. Stone, the expected boarder, looking earnestly, almost tenderly into her face. She grew crimson, and ceased singing at once.

For some reason Delia had been thinking of Mr. Stone. She had thought him very handsome and noble-looking when he came to the house the other day, but why she kept him in her mind so much she could not tell. Strange to say, Mr. Stone colored, too, and spoke somewhat confusedly.

"Pray do not let me disturb you," he said, "I have been listening to your song with so much pleasure." And he stammered out some excuse for being there.

He quickly recovered his composure, however, and talked so pleasantly that Delia felt quite at home with him. She forgot Miss Chick, forgot the pink wrapper, forgot how time was flying. He talked about music, told her about his travels in foreign lands, and Delia listened with wide delighted eyes. She was naturally shy, but she felt no embarrassment with him. He seemed to understand just how to draw her out, and she gave her opinions, spoke her thoughts in a pretty quaint manner which completely charmed him. Mr. Stone was a bachelor of thirty-five, and for the first time in his life he had fallen in love. He had fallen in love with Delia's face the other day when he caught a glimpse of it at the backdoor among the cinnamon roses. That face was what had drawn him to take up his abode under Miss Chick's roof, instead of the fact of her being a single body. Then, to-day, he had fallen in love with her voice, and now he was as deeply lost in that bliss-

ful, though anxious state, as ever an unfortunate bachelor was.

The clock suddenly struck six, and Delia started with as much dismay as did Cinderella when the clock warned her that in a moment her jewels and fine clothes would fall from her and leave her in rags once more.

"What will Miss Chick say to me?" she said in a tone of distress. "The wrapper cannot be finished, and I haven't even thought about supper."

Mr. Stone had learned something of her history, and understood the trials of her position at Miss Chick's better than she thought. He read character with great acuteness, and though he had enjoyed but one interview with that lady, he felt quite well acquainted with her.

"Leave Miss Chick, and the unfinished dress to me," he said, smiling. "If any one is at fault, I am that one. I think I can convince the lady of the fact. I—"

Miss Chick returned unexpectedly early before he finished his sentence. She started on beholding Mr. Stone, and in her surprise forgot to be jealous of Delia's presence.

"I found your house so attractive, Miss Chick, that I couldn't help coming sooner than I arranged to come. I thought it would make no difference to you, as the room you assigned to me was already vacant."

Miss Chick beamed upon him most graciously. Of course it would make no difference, only the room was going to be refurnished for his especial benefit. She was delighted to see him, and begged him to make himself perfectly at home.

Delia escaped from the room as quickly as possible, and supper was on the table in the nicest order before she left Mr. Stone's presence, even to remove her things.

"Dely," she said the next morning, while the girl was busied in making up her bed, "how do you think I should look in a white silk dress? It seems to me it wouldn't be as becoming as muslin, though I s'pose Mr. Stone would want his bride to dress as rich as possible."

Delia said that she thought white silk would be very elegant, and more suitable for a rich man's bride than muslin. But she was obliged to turn her head to conceal a laugh.

The next week Mr. Stone coolly announced his intention to marry Delia.

Miss Chick grew fairly purple with rage

and surprise, and was unable to utter one word at first.

"Good gracious! Do you know what you are about? Why, I took that girl out of the poorhouse. Nobody knows nothin' about her family, and she's the deceitfulest, artfulest, ungratefulest, worst-tempered minx I ever beheld—She—"

"Miss Chick, you forget yourself," said Mr. Stone, flushing angrily. "Miss Carlton's father was a classmate of mine in college, and I have been trying to find her for years. I knew that he left a child when he died. I am as fully satisfied with her family connections as with herself."

Only policy and prudence prevented Miss Chick from swearing. He was rich, Della would be a great lady, and since it was too late to prevent the marriage, it would not do to offend either bride or bridegroom.

"Pray excuse me, my feelin's was so over-come to think that Dely, that I've looked upon as a dear sister so many long years, should go and get engaged to be married, and never tell me. It's too hard, Mr. Stone. I'm dreadful tender-hearted, and I have cherished that sweet girl as the apple of my eye."

Della, who happened to appear on the scene just then, was more than surprised to find herself locked fast in that tearful lady's embrace, and kissed by her in the most rapturous manner.

"O, you cruel, cruel girl, why did you conceal your love from me?" she said over and over again.

The announcement that a strange gentleman wished to see the lady of the house, came as a happy relief to Della, and Miss Chick smoothed her brow and dried her tears as suddenly as if it had been done by magic.

The strange gentleman was a little, fat, elderly specimen of the male species, with reddish whiskers. His clothes were somewhat threadbare, but he carried himself with an air of great importance.

"The king of hearts," thought Miss Chick, and hope dawned in her soul once more, as well as more friendly feeling toward Aunt Mimy. She received him with her most gracious smile.

"Is this the lady of the mansion?" he inquired with dignity.

Miss Chick said she was that person.

"I am the Rev. Mr. Soper, and thought, ah—thought, as I was riding this way, I would call and see you."

Miss Chick assured him that she was delighted to see him. She had the pleasure of hearing him preach once, and invited him to stop to tea, which invitation he accepted without hesitation.

"This is a fine little property," he remarked to Mr. Stone, looking with an appreciative eye from the windows of his hostess over her well-cultivated fields, while she was absent on an errand to the kitchen.

"Very," Mr. Stone replied.

"They say *she* is a very estimable lady, too, eminently pious. A Baptist I believe, but under the right influence she might be converted to Adventism."

Mr. Stone thought it possible.

Mr. Soper and Miss Chick sat in the parlor by themselves that evening. Mr. Soper had lost his wife—the mother of eight promising little Sopers, and Miss Chick sympathized with him deeply.

"Dely," said she the next day, "I always knew that I was cut out for a minister's wife; I couldn't have married nobody else, anyway. So when anybody's asked me, something has told me to say no. Mr. Soper hasn't any parish, but he travels about doing good, and I feel that I have a call to join him and do what I can toward saving souls. We are goin' to be married next week, so you and I'll be brides together, poor dear Mr. Stone! I know he liked me at first, but you are a great deal better suited to him than I am. I never had no worldly ambition, but was all for follerin in the path of duty."

Della thought of Aunt Mimy's fortune-telling, and was amazed. She was somewhat enlightened, however, when she went over to bid Aunt Mimy good-by. The old woman had always been kind to her when she was a little girl, and Della felt grateful to her on this account.

"Lor, I sent Parson Soper to her—told him she was rich, and he's dreadful lazy, and don't like preaching very well, and then nobody cares to sit under him, for he aint very eloquent. I knew she'd be pleased with him, anyway, so I just recommended her, and he wasn't long in making up his mind when he saw her place, I'll warrant you," said Aunt Mimy. "But as for *your* fortune, I saw it in the cards, as plain as could be, and then when I saw Mr. Stone get off the stage, and heard he was going to Miss Chick's, I knew he couldn't help fallin in love with you, for it's plain enough that he's one of the kind that knows what is what!"

MISS KENLEM'S VALENTINE.

BY BLANCHE SHAW.

ST. VALENTINE'S morning, and Miss Kenlem stood looking through the polished plate glass of her window into the cold cheerless street. A pretty picture she made standing there with the heavy crimson curtain draping her tall graceful form, and lending a slight glow to her proud beautiful face, whose pallor was said by the critical to contrast too sharply with her shining crown of jetty hair. Beautiful indeed! but this beauty did not bring joy, for even the passing moment; for its owner's face wore an expression even more dreary and desolate than the street. Presently the clank of a heel rang out clear and loud on the frosty air, and then the gray form of the postman appeared, laden with his weight of joy and sorrow. He stopped at the opposite house, and gave to the rosy-faced Biddie who answered his ring a white missive, of such prodigious size that Miss Kenlem, from her distance, knew it to be a wondrously beautiful valentine. The girl held it a few minutes delicately, regarding it affectionately from different points of view, as a child does a peppermint-stick before he tests its sweetness. At last she broke the seal. The contents were evidently equal to her expectation, and the outside; for her face was radiant with smiles and blushes as she devoured

them. The weary look faded from Miss Kenlem's face, pushed out by one of keen pain, tinged—was it possible?—with envy! Could it be that she, the courted belle and heiress, with lovers by the score, envied the poor hard-working servant her gaudy valentine, and the one heart's devotion that it represented? Ah no! it was not that. The valentine and its blushing owner were both abstract existences to her. It was what they represented that she envied—the smile of unfeigned happiness; the glory of womanly weakness; the power of loving where she was loved!

Miss Kenlem leaned her brow against the cold glass, and out in the dreary street a memory picture slowly unfolded itself with cruel clearness. A foaming dashing stream, bordered by overhanging trees, through which distant blue hills were shown; by the stream a young girl with wind-tossed curls, standing on a rock, and leaning with one hand on the shoulder of a light-haired youth, as she bent to look at a picture on an easel before her; but the eyes of the youth were fixed on her—in his sight the lovelier picture of the two. For a moment it stood there, mocking her with its false reality. Then other memories rose between her and it, each pushing it further away—

the willfulness of the giddy girl, the gentle remonstrance unheeded; the wild infatuation of an hour; the lovers' quarrels, that grew each time more bitter; till at last she flung that cruel taunt that sank like a poisoned dart into the proud sensitive heart of the artist, and turned his love to scorn. Relentlessly did memory bring all this, till at last the picture was all blotted out, and she stood looking only at the cold dark street, no darker or colder than her heart had been since that bitter day. She pressed her jewelled fingers over her eyes, and was turning from the window, when she heard a pleading little voice say, "Please, ma'am, give me something, papa is so very sick!"

Looking back, she saw a small mite leaning over the railing talking to her cook, who, by words and gesture, was ordering her away. Miss Kenlem was not, in the general acceptance of the term, charitable; but something in the utter helplessness of this little waif appealed to her so strongly that she rang and ordered her to be brought to her at once. The maid shrugged her shoulders at the whim, but obeyed, and in a few moments the little beggar stood before her. Miss Kenlem looked at her curiously. A little mite of a thing, apparently about five years old, with a delicate sensitive face, pale and pinched by want; a tangled mass of bright brown curls, that she carried like a young duchess, and great gray eyes, that stared straight at Miss Kenlem, full of curiosity, but overshadowed by fear. Miss Kenlem looked back at the child with gaze far less steady, for it was eyes as deep and gray as these that had looked so tenderly on the girl that morning by the brook. At last Miss Kenlem spoke:

"What is your name, little girl?"

"Isola."

"Isola—what a pretty name! But why are you alone in the street this cold and dark day?"

The gray eyes filled with tears.

"Because—because—O madam, papa is so sick, and we have nothing to eat, and it is so cold! I stole out while he slept, to try to beg a little, but—but—" Her tears mastering her, she burst into a storm of sobs.

Miss Kenlem drew her to her and tried to soothe her, and as soon as the childish storm had run its course she told her tale. No mother, a sick father, cold, hunger, starvation staring at them; against his commands she had stolen out to beg. With the

tender conscience of childhood she lamented her sin of disobedience, but added, with fresh tears:

"But I could not help it. Indeed, madam, I could not see papa die."

"Poor child!" said Miss Kenlem, stroking the bright curls. "You have done no wrong. Where does your papa live?"

The child named a street near by.

"Great heavens! such suffering so near, and I revelling in every luxury! Wait one moment, child, and I will go with you to see your father."

The child's eyes brightened, and then fell, as, with a blush, she said:

"Pardon me, madam, but—but I'd rather you wouldn't come till I've asked papa. He is so very proud that it might make him angry, and that would hurt him."

Miss Kenlem stared in amazement, and the thought, "impostor," darted through her brain. But then, the child's face was so innocent, and her language and air so much above her appearance, that the objection did not seem unreasonable; and after a few more questions, by which she learned that her mother had been an Italian woman, and had died a long time ago, she gave her some money, and sent her away, telling her to return the next day, with her father's consent for her to visit her.

Maurice Carroll turned painfully on his wretched bed, and with a half moan opened his eyes on the blank walls of his desolate room.

"Issie!" he called faintly, but no reply. "Issie!" louder, and with a shade of surprise. Still no reply; and half raising himself on his arm, he was looking around the empty room in alarm, when the door burst open, and Isola, flushed with happiness and excitement, rushed in, holding up her money.

"Papa! papa!" she cried; "see what she gave me! Enough to buy fire, and food, and medicine. The good beautiful lady!" And unable to say more, she threw her arms around her father's neck. Carroll caressed the excited child in amazement, and when she grew calmer, asked:

"Who gave this to you, Isola? Where have you been?" And then she told her story. The hot blood mounted to the man's brow as he listened.

Good heaven! could it be that he had fallen to a beggar's level? He seized the money, and was about to fling it from him,

but the piteous light in his little daughter's eyes stopped him. With a groan he gave it back to her, saying:

"You are right, Issie. We are beggars now, and like beggars must be thankful for every favor shown to us. Take the money and buy what you can with it. But—" and he seized her arm tightly, "you did not tell the woman where we live, so that she can come and gaze in lofty beneficence on our wretchedness, and plume herself on the good her gold has done?"

"O no, papa; I told her you might not like it, but promised to come again and tell her then."

"Right, but for the promise; for, my child, you must not go again. I cannot let her bestow her bounty in ignorance of its recipient, and never will Maurice Carroll expose his wretchedness to one who may have known him in his former days. Go, Issie, go now." And Carroll sank back on his pillow, while Isola, tightly clutching her money, went out to buy what comforts she could.

All the next day Miss Kenlem waited and watched for Isola, and not till the gray dusk settled down did she give her up; and then she only put her by till the next day, thinking her father might be worse, or something else had kept her away. But the next day passed without her, and the next, till at last Miss Kenlem could frame no more excuses, and her reason forced her to brand her as an impostor, and give her up. She did this with a pang that surprised her, for, unconsciously to her, the deep gray eyes of the child had struck through the cold present of her life, down to deep warm memory; and it was for the sake of memory, as much as for the child, that she clung to her. But she put her away, and went on her own life, as proudly as before.

A week had passed since St. Valentine's day, and Miss Kenlem's carriage rolled slowly through the crowded street. Suddenly a child's sharp cry rang above the din, and then Miss Kenlem saw a little bleeding form borne from beneath her horses' feet. It looked familiar to her. She ordered the carriage to stop, and in a minute she had made her way to the side of the sufferer. She was right. It was Isola. She knelt beside her, and wiped the blood from the little pale face. The child opened her eyes. Though badly hurt, she was still sensible, and knew her. An officer approached to

take the child in charge, but Miss Kenlem, acting from a sudden resolution, said:

"I know her, and will take care of her." And calling her coachman, she had her carried to her carriage. She was about to order him to drive home, when the thought occurred that this was the time to test her truth; and she said:

"Isola, you must tell me where you live now, for I must take you to your father."

Isola hesitated a moment, and then replied:

"Yes, I may tell now, for poor papa is so sick he won't know." And she gave the number of the street she had named. A short drive brought them to the house; and taking the slight form of the child in her own arms, Miss Kenlem mounted the dirty stairs.

"That's the door," said Isola, faintly. "Don't knock. Papa sleeps nearly all the time now."

Miss Kenlem opened the door and entered. The glaring sunlight fell through the uncurtained window full on the pale face of the sleeping man, dancing and laughing over it as though in mockery of its wanness. Miss Kenlem crossed the threshold, and then she stopped, while a half cry half groan burst from her lips, and the child slipped from her arms to the floor. Maurice Carroll was the lover of her youth, the man who stood beside her that morning by the stream!

She stood a moment looking at him, and then the old love welled up and she took a step toward the bed, but only one. A quick cry from Isola stopped her, she turned fiercely on the child with clenched hands and flashing eyes. That little suffering form that lay before her, so helpless and weak that a blow could sweep it into eternity, was a gulf deeper and wider than that of death between her and the sleeping man! She was the living proof, that while she had wasted her hopes and life on an empty memory, he had found joy and happiness in the love of another! O, the bitter burning anguish that tore her heart, the moments she stood looking at that pale baby face! It was the slow dull torture of years crowded into one hot pang. At last, with the cry of a hunted beast, she rushed from the room, and cowering out in the cold dark hall, sobbed and moaned till her agony was numbed, and then she went out of the house, and entered her carriage, and drove away. An hour

later another carriage containing a doctor and a nurse drove up before the same house, and took Maurice Carroll and his child away to comfortable lodgings, where every care was given them.

A year passed away. Miss Kenlem's spacious drawing-rooms were blazing with light, beauty and fashion. Among all she shone as usual, the brightest star; unchanged by time and her fierce ordeal, save that her proud face was still prouder, and her smile never went beyond her lips. She stood talking carelessly with a tall distinguished-looking man, one upon whom, rumor said, she bestowed more favor than was usually the fortune of her admirers.

A rare specimen of art hung opposite them. The gentleman's eyes fell on it and he said:

"That is a fine picture, Miss Kenlem. Its equal is seldom seen this side of the water; but I'm not surprised that your taste should be above the national standard."

Miss Kenlem elevated her eyebrows the least trifle.

"You do me too much honor. My taste in pictures is entirely uncultivated. In fact, I may say, I dislike them."

"You astonish me! I thought it part of the code for all ladies to be fond of pictures."

"Have you not discovered, that I regulate my actions by no code but by my own."

"Yes, long ago; but I thought this taste so much in harmony with yourself. Beauty should gravitate to its kind."

Miss Kenlem cast a glance, half contempt half impatience, on him, and with ready tact he added: "But nonsense aside, Miss Kenlem, I wish you would overcome your objections sufficiently to visit the Art Exhibition and see a picture, that is making quite a stir in the artistic world. I think you could not help admiring it. Pray go, I won't tell you the picture, but leave you the pleasure of discovering it, which you can't fail to do. You will go?"

"Perhaps!" and another person approaching, the conversation was ended.

St. Valentine's day, clear and bright, the very opposite of the last, when Miss Kenlem had envied Biddle her blushes, and Fate guided Isola to her door. She sat by the same window, thinking bitterly of this, as the sunlight fell over her. Her heart was dark as the day was bright. She leaned back on her cushion with a weary sigh, and her eyes wandered over the room till they

rested on the picture over the mantel. The conversation and her half-promise occurred to her. She rose and ordered her carriage to go to the picture gallery. Anything to distract the thoughts that were stifling her.

It was long before the fashionable hour when she reached the gallery; and the long hall was but thinly dotted by groups of lounging artists and critics, carelessly talking and laughing together, while, occasionally, a more enthusiastic one would be seen studying some favorite picture alone. Miss Kenlem scarcely noticed any of them, as she walked down the long hall, glancing carelessly at its freight of beauty, till suddenly she stopped with bated breath and dilating eyes. Before her, with the best light of the hall falling over it, hung a picture—the gem of the collection; but she neither knew nor cared for that—she only saw it as it was. Blue hills in the background; and in front a dashing brook with overhanging trees, and on the bank an easel, on which a young girl, with rumpled curls, and one hand resting on the shoulder of a bright-haired youth, was looking earnestly. The room swam round, the bright sunlight seemed a halo of glory, and she could have knelt before the picture as a shrine. No need to look at the catalogue; but one hand could have painted that picture, and but one emotion could have guided the hand, and that was—love! Hers was not the only heart that had kept the faith of memory. Though time and care, and storm had all done their best to crush it, deep down in that other heart it had smouldered on, till it burst out in that picture, and called to her from every shade and line! Bathed in her dreams of happiness, she gazed on the picture, till a childish voice aroused her saying:

"Papal papa, see! The good beautiful lady."

She knew the voice—his child—but it aroused no bitterness; and turning with the happy light still in her eyes, she met the astonished gaze of Maurice Carroll! A moment's silence, and then a haughty look spread over Carroll's face, and bowing coldly he half turned away; but with both hands extended Miss Kenlem stopped him, saying: "O Maurice! Maurice! I am so glad at last!"

And without a word his hands clasped hers and the memory of all those bitter years went down into the chasm of oblivion.

Another year has passed, and Mrs. Carroll

stands bright and happy by her husband's side, in the same old window. Again the postman comes down the street, and leaves a bulky missive at the opposite house.

Carroll smiled.

"St. Valentine's day, my dear, I should

have sent you one;" but his wife turned to Isola who had just entered and laying her hand on her bright curls said:

"Maurice, two years ago, Heaven sent me this, and my thankful heart can never ask another Valentine."

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MISS LEEDS.

BY LOUISE DUPEE.

It was a sunny old-fashioned drawing-room—not too elegant to be comfortable, but furnished with a quaint richness—the walls hung with rare pictures. Flies flew in and out the long windows, which opened into a famous old garden at their own free will. There were not so many as to be troublesome, but they made a pleasant summery buzz in the room, that was just the sound to dream by, lolling in one of those capacious armchairs. And one or two great yellow bees came in and made themselves perfectly at home in a bouquet of scarlet lilies which drooped from a delicate silver vase on the mantel.

Miss Leeds had folded her work, and sat dreaming, with her head drooped, and the last sunlight in her bright hair. She was a beautiful picture in the soft summer dusk, with her delicate Grecian profile, peach-blossom complexion, and rare golden hair rolled back from her face after the fashion of old portraits. Madam Lindsay was dozing in her chair. A serene complacent little old lady, who might have been handsome in her youth, with a row of flaxen curls touching the round cheeks, like rosy apples in wax. She was not old enough to be a particle infirm, but just old enough to wear little fanciful caps, and a kerchief about her throat, to hide a little unseemly length in the neck, and the impertinent wrinkles, which, in spite of art, had come to disfigure its plump smoothness. But the kerchief was of lace, as dainty as frost,

and she wore frills of the same about her wrists, falling over the little pink hands, as pretty as a girl's.

Miss Leeds liked madam. She was not overbearing and haughty like her daughter, Mrs. Mowbray, and she exercised an almost motherly kindness toward the forlorn governess. Mrs. Mowbray was kind enough, in her way, but she was condescending, patronizing; and Miss Leeds was not just the one to be patronized, for she had the dignity and grace of a princess, and wore an air of conscious superiority. Madam thought she was an angel, but Mrs. Mowbray declared her to be far removed from this winged spotlessness; very far removed, in her opinion, especially as regards temper, for Miss Leeds was sharp, and curt, and sarcastic to this worthy lady, but gentleness and patience itself to madam, who was sometimes tiresome, as all old ladies are.

Mrs. Mowbray had thought seriously of dismissing her from her service. She almost felt it her duty to do so on Richmond's account; but then he would never think of marrying one so much inferior to himself—one who was only a sort of upper servant in the house. She knew that it was dangerous to take one into the family, as they had taken her, to flaunt her yellow hair in her brother's eyes, and show her arched foot on the stairway, without recommendation, and without any knowledge of her past life or family. And it was evident that this artful young woman had

turned his head already, but they did not seem to be on very intimate terms of late. She noticed that Miss Leeds took pains to avoid him; whether it was the result of some new scheme in that deep head of hers, or prudent common sense, Mrs. Mowbray was unable to determine, but she was suspicious of the former.

But if she should dismiss her, who should she ever find to fill her place? She was so elegant and accomplished; the girls were growing to be perfect models of young ladyhood under her charge; and then her taste was so effective in party decorations, and her advice invaluable in the matter of toilets, and this was so uncommon in governesses. They were usually ungainly creatures, in drab dresses and poke bonnets, without the slightest idea of style, and wearing an air of meek resignation and injured innocence, which oppressed one with a feeling of guilt, as if one were in some way entirely unknown to one's self, heaping afflictions upon the friendless orphan. Mrs. Mowbray had had a great experience, and she preferred the pert sauciness and cool indifference of brilliant Miss Leeds vastly to these solemn orphans in drab.

Miss Leeds was always handsomely dressed. Her salary was not large, but she possessed the happy faculty of making much out of little. She altered over old dresses with her deft fingers, and they looked like new; and Mrs. Mowbray wondered at the endless variety of costly and rare laces which invariably encircled her pearly throat; lace delicate as mist threads, yellow with richness, such as even that wealthy and elegant dame herself could scarcely produce from her splendid wardrobe; and she wore sometimes quaint old-fashioned pearl ornaments which were of no small value.

There was a mystery about this Miss Leeds. Romantic Bertha Mowbray was always dilating upon it. She was like a person in a story-book—like one of the unfortunate princesses who flourish in nursery traditions, defrauded of their birthright by envious relations, and cast upon the world penniless and friendless. She never alluded to her past life. She informed Mrs. Mowbray that her parents were dead, when she applied to her for the situation of governess, in answer to that lady's advertisement. She brought no recommendation, she had no friends, and would not be questioned.

But she sang, and Mrs. Mowbray was charmed; she produced a fine picture as a specimen of her painting, and Mrs. Mowbray was more than satisfied. She spoke French with the true Parisian accent. Her manners were perfect, her face had the most winning expression imaginable, and her voice was low, and persuasive, and refined. Mrs. Mowbray was fastidious, and the girl pleased her fancy. She was just what she desired, only she had always made it a point never to receive a person into her family, in any capacity, without satisfactory recommendation, and she was not at all pleased with the young woman's decided waive of all questioning; but, nevertheless, she concluded to take her on trial for a few weeks, if she chose to come thus; and now more than six months had elapsed, and Miss Leeds grew more and more into the hearts of the household every day, loving and beloved by all except Mrs. Mowbray herself, whose views on the subject we have given before.

Miss Leeds was prettier than usual to-day, in a dress of pale green, made with a square corsage, with the usual foam of lace about the neck and sleeves, and a cluster of purple violets in her hair. The rest of the young people had gone on a drive to the beach, and madam had called her down stairs to sit with her while Mrs. Mowbray took her usual siesta.

It was nearly time for lights now, and Mrs. Mowbray appeared in the drawing-room in a fresh toilet, with rose-colored ribbons, startling the young girl from her reverie by a request to sing, as she sank indolently upon her velvet cushions.

Miss Leeds rubbed a dimpled hand into her eyes as if she had been asleep, for a bewildered moment, then walked softly across the room to the piano. A silvery prelude ran up the keys, and a wonderful voice stole out into the twilight; a penetrating, thrilling voice, which reached in to find the hearts of its listeners, and touch their tenderest chords. She sang a favorite of madam's—a grand old sea song of wreck and tempest, with notes in it like falling spray, the wailing of winds, the dripping of rain, and the swelling and dying of the gale. One shivered while she sang, feeling themselves tossed under starless skies, over seething waves; the unreachable home-lights flashing far away; heard the hurrying of feet over crowded decks, the sliding

of ropes, the booming of minute-guns, and wild cries of fear; and when the great lamp in the hall, suddenly lighted, streamed in through the open door, with its cheery radiance, her listeners came back to reality with a bewildered start.

"That was sung *con expressione*," said a low voice, very near, and Miss Leeds looked up to meet the dark eyes of Mr. Richmond Lindsay, who had entered unseen, and was standing by her side.

"Ah, Mr. Lindsay, is that you? You must have stolen in like a shadow; I didn't know that you were here."

"I have been stealing your song," said he; "you know you seldom think it worth the while to sing to me, and I only hear you now and then from the far-away regions above stairs; you seem attached to that dolorous old organ in the schoolroom."

"I do not sing often," said she; "if I do, the inspiration is all taken away. Once in a while I feel prompted to sing by some spirit within, and it is only then that I sing well."

"The spirit must have prompted you to-night, then, and I wish it might urge you to sing longer."

"What do you wish to hear?" asked she.

"O, anything; a little Scotch ballad with love in it and no tears. The one you just sang was exquisite, but so mournful."

"Pathos is my forte, Mr. Lindsay; I cannot help bringing in the tears, whatever I sing, so I never attempt those sprightly little ballads. Bertha sings them charmingly."

"One would hardly imagine that you ever even dreamed of tears," said he; "is it not strange that the gayest people in the world take so to doleful stories, and sorrowful people, and pathetic music?"

"O well, you know the minor key comes in grandly with major music," answered she, lightly.

"Richmond," called Mrs. Mowbray, from her sofa, "will you come here a moment? I'd like to speak to you."

"Very soon, Eleanor," said he, with a slight impatience in his tone.

Miss Leeds curled her scarlet lip. "Ah," thought she, "you hardly fancy a tete-a-tete between your wonderful brother and the governess, do you, madam? Do you imagine that one cannot look at him without falling in love?"

Mr. Lindsay feared, from the expression of her face, one of those impenetrable fogs

in which she had chosen to wrap herself so often of late. He had scarcely caught a glimpse of her for weeks, and he was determined to keep her in sight a little while now. Miss Leeds, letting her fingers wander absently over the keys, they gathered unconsciously that plaintive melody of Abt's "When the swallows homeward fly."

"Will you sing that, Miss Leeds? Nothing could be sweeter, and I haven't heard it for years."

She sang it with a depth of feeling, as if she had known or dreaded some such parting.

"Would I were that fortunate lover," said he, at its close—"fortunate even though we were parted, to be blessed with such remembrance."

"But I do not care for the words, you know," she said. "I do not believe in the woes of separated lovers. Love is pretty in pictures, and poetry, and for very young people to dream and shed April tears over, but it is nothing to me. I'm almost twenty-three."

He gave her a little reproachful look, which the downcast eyes would not see, but he was unbelieving. This strange little woman was less a puzzle to him than she was once. Love cannot deceive love.

"Richmond," called Mrs. Mowbray again, and just then a ring at the door announced guests. Lights were brought in, and when Mr. Richmond turned again to look for Miss Leeds, she had gone.

A half hour afterward the scent of his cigar stole up to her lonely window, and she saw a tall form vanish through the gateway.

The hum of many voices sounded below, and a silken flutter in the hall. The great rooms were filled with company. Some one was singing Schubert's Serenade, and Miss Leeds came out of her room, and leaned over the balustrade to listen, for it was a favorite melody of hers.

She was startled by the sound of her own name in the hall, just below where she stood. A group of ladies were engaged in earnest conversation, among them Mrs. Mowbray.

"An actress, and the daughter of a murderer! only think of it!" came from Mrs. Mowbray, in a shocked tone. "I was always sure that there was something very mysterious about her; indeed, I have been on the eve of dismissing her for a long time,

only I—" and here were sentences which Miss Leeds lost.

"I advise you to see Mrs. Anthon; she can tell you all about it. She came over in the same steamer from Europe with the actor and his daughter, a little more than a year ago. I have forgotten his name, but she will remember. Fred Mortimer remarked to me the other day, when we met her walking on the beach, how much she resembled a young actress whom he saw at a New Orleans theatre last autumn. She and her father were both there, and there the affray took place. He shot a fellow-actor in some quarrel, and when the officers came to take him, shot himself. The man had talent of a superior order, they say, but he was a dissipated, reckless creature."

Miss Leeds waited to hear no more. She stole softly back into her own room and sat down, pressing her hands to her forehead, as if bewildered; her lips as white as her brow.

She remained motionless for several minutes, then arose with a sudden energy, pulled a great trunk from the shades of a closet, and began to pack therein the contents of various drawers. She shook down dress after dress from their pegs in the wardrobe, and folded them, coolly and carefully, smoothing out the folds like one in a dream. She gathered up in a box a few scattered trinkets, locked the trunk and placed the key in her pocket, and then threw herself into a chair by the open window. She hummed a bar of *Il Legreto*, and then, with strange inconsistency, burst into tears.

The house and all without grew still, only some little bird in the linden tree, startled by a falling dewdrop, awoke and chirped, and the leaves rustled like ghostly whispers. The wind blew up afresh, and fanned her feverish brow, and a fragrant little shower stole down from a black cloud in the west. The great clock in the hall struck three, and still she sat there, her bright hair damp with dew—her head resting upon the window sill.

A little refreshing sleep came then, and brought her a dream which stole away sorrow. And when the dawn fluttered its roses and sunbeams in her face, she awoke with a start, remembering vaguely that some unpleasant thing had happened, but unable to recall it for several minutes.

It was a pleasant old place, Miss Leeds

thought, as she leaned out of the window to take a last look. The sunny garden, with its gay old-fashioned flowers, the great drooping elms, the old dark lindens, the smoothly-shaven lawn, with its velvet verdure, unspotted by weed or shrub, save a few audacious little white clovers. The six months she had passed here had been the happiest in her life. She had scarcely known real kindness before since her mother died. Dear old madam, the dear girls, Mr. Richmond—but she had no time to be sorrowful; she must not think of this. Mrs. Mowbray had gone down stairs; the young people had not yet arisen. She could not, would not see them again. She would leave in the eight o'clock train, to go—she knew not whither, but God would lead her.

She found madam and Mrs. Mowbray in the breakfast-room; madam looking very sorrowful, Mrs. Mowbray resolute and frigid as the north pole, Miss Leeds, a little hollow-eyed, perhaps, but otherwise her own bright self, in a travelling-dress.

"Miss Leeds," spoke Mrs. Mowbray, hesitatingly, as she entered—"Miss Leeds, I have something to say to you, and so—"

"I know all, Mrs. Mowbray," interrupted she. "I heard your conversation last night in the hall. Pardon me, but I heard my name spoken in an excited tone, and I could not help listening."

"That is well, since it relieves me of the disagreeable task of repeating it to you," said Mrs. Mowbray.

"Mrs. Anthon's story is all true," began Miss Leeds again; "and I am going to leave here in the eight o'clock train; my trunks are ready."

"Very well, miss, I think you are doing very wisely, and the coachman shall be at the door whenever you say to convey you where you wish; and here is the month's pay which is due you."

"I will go at once," said Miss Leeds, and she went up stairs to don her shawl and bonnet, and Mrs. Mowbray sat down with the air of one who is conscious of having done her duty.

"My dear," spoke Madam Lindsay, timidly, to her daughter, "what has Miss Leeds done to justify you in sending her away thus, before she obtains another situation? It seems to me cruel. Where will the poor girl go?"

"She chooses her own course; and as for her obtaining another situation, I shall take

care that she deceives no other lady as she has deceived me. O mamma, it is too shocking to think of her father and her family. I shall feel unsafe until she is gone; and to think of a low actress having charge of our sweet girls."

"Madam came out into the hall to bid her good-by, and kissed her tenderly, and Miss Leeds longed to throw herself into the arms of the motherly old lady and tell her all her sorrow. The wondering servants were clamorous in their regrets; Mrs. Mowbray condescended to wish her well. And so Miss Leeds left the old house, but not, as she thought, forever.

Three years passed, and Mr. Richmond Lindsay found himself one morning in gay charming Paris—the very place in which to forget one's self, and send care away on wings. He had been roaming about the continent for more than two years, on a strange foolish errand—searching amid the wonderful crowd of faces for one which he had lost, dearer to him than all the world, and haunting him always, in a framework of golden hair, and with large sensitive brown eyes. He knew that three years before the owner of that face had gone over to the Old World in the *Arago*; he had seen her name in the list of passengers, and he would follow her to the world's end, though it were like searching on the seashore for one particular grain of sand, to search through those great cities for one single woman, to whose whereabouts he had not the slightest clue. He was almost despairing now. He had stopped in almost every little wayside town through England, the home of her birth. He had strolled about the crowded streets of the large cities, starting and thrilling at every glimpse of hair which bore the slightest resemblance to gold—at every quick thrilling step or graceful figure which seemed to him like hers. He looked through the great churches, Sabbath after Sabbath, until he had visited them all. He searched the faces in the village windows. He broke through astonished groups from whose midst he had caught the ring of a silvery laugh which seemed as familiar as home bells. He lounged about dwellings from which, by chance, he had heard a voice singing one of her old songs, in a tone which he imagined to be strangely like hers. He had employed every means in his power to find her, but all in vain.

Paris was sparkling in spring sunshine,

and Mr. Lindsay strolled through the streets, merry with the clatter of that musical foreign tongue, weary, and worn, and dispirited. He was half vexed with the gay bright faces he met on every hand; no sight pleased him. He pushed away rudely the hand of a little flower-girl, who held fresh violets up to attract his attention. Something in their faint sweet breath affected him unpleasantly. He crossed the street to avoid meeting an old friend and countryman of his; he was in no mood for friendly greetings; he preferred to be alone. He strolled aimlessly into odd little shops, purchasing he knew not what, and wandered absently through the great galleries of art.

He went hither and thither, hardly knowing or caring where, and one day he found himself in a small picture gallery in the Rue —, where he had seen by chance, in an advertisement, that a choice collection of paintings were to be exhibited. Groups of gentlemen and ladies were standing here and there criticizing the pictures with a great deal of French gesticulation and animated talk.

Mr. Lindsay came up just behind a gay young couple, who were discussing the beauty of some "*belle Anglaise*."

"Wait until she turns her head," said the young lady, "and see what a profile—what superb hair!"

He followed the direction of their eyes, where a graceful female figure was standing alone before some odd old painting, with her back turned to them.

Something in the slight tall figure in its graceful drapery, quickened his pulse-beats. She turned her head slightly—a tress of golden hair escaped from her bonnet. He moved eagerly toward her, and the long-searched-for brown eyes looked up softly into his.

"Katharine!"

"Ah, Mr. Richmond," in her old tone, in no way surprised. "I knew you would come sometime; I have always felt that I should see you again."

"But I have despaired of finding you. I have searched for you nearly the world over."

"For me?" she asked, with a tremulous blush.

"Can you doubt that I would, Katharine?" said he, bending over her with impassioned forgetfulness. But he recovered himself at once, and they talked of common-

place things, and he had time to note that she was more beautiful than ever. The month, which was a little too resolute and haughty of old, swelling in soft tremulous curves; the eyes softer and deeper; the features less sharp in their exquisite contour. Then her companions came up from the other side of the hall, and Mr. Lindsay was introduced to "my uncle, Lord Etheredge," and to "my aunt Lady Etheredge."

And Lord Etheredge, a noble and benevolent-looking old gentleman, was very gracious, and Lady Etheredge, a stately old lady, held out her hand to him; but Mr. Lindsay was in such a state of bewilderment that he never remembered what they said, or what he said, only that he was invited to dine with them the next day at Hotel —, and that he saw Miss Leeds driven away in a carriage emblazoned with a baronet's crest and coat-of-arms.

Five months later I visited the old Lindsay mansion, where the happiest group imaginable were gathered in that same sunny old drawing-room. Madam sat, more smilingly complacent than ever, in her armchair, and at her feet, like a little child, sat a young lady with whom you are all familiar, in a dress of soft pale green, with violets in her hair. Not just the Miss Leeds of old is Mrs. Richmond Lindsay, but a trifle sweeter and more gentle, and with a new light in her clear brown eyes. And her husband, who sits by her side, is not just the same Richmond Lindsay who listened to Miss Leeds's sorrowful songs years ago in this same room. He is older and more careworn, but his wife declares that he never was as handsome as now. There is never a shadow of moodiness on his face, and his brow is as clear as the day.

Mrs. Mowbray reclines as usual upon her velvet cushions, beaming with wonderful

graciousness upon that "artful young woman," who had entrapped her brother with yellow hair. Lovely Bertha Mowbray is there also, so delighted to have her dear Miss Leeds back again that she is unable to repress her somewhat noisy demonstrations. They are talking of old times.

"Ah, my dear, how fortunate it was," said madam, "that you should have obtained a situation in a family who were going to England just at that time. And your poor old grandfather was glad to receive you at last before he died."

How many such cases there are—fathers disowning their daughters because of their marrying against their will.

"If my dear mother had only lived to see that day," said Mrs. Richmond, chokingly.

"And Richmond found you at last. I was afraid my poor boy had gone on a fool's errand."

"And how did you know what my errand was, mother?"

"Ah, my son, your old mother's eyes are sharp if they are faded."

LITTLE THINGS.—Little words are the sweetest to hear; little charities fly furthest and stay longest on the wing; little flakes are the stillest; little hearts are the fondest, and little farms the best tilled. Little books are the most read, and little songs the dearest loved. And when nature would make anything especially rare and beautiful, she makes it little—little pearls, little diamonds, little dew. Agur's is a model prayer, yet it is but a little one, and the burden of the petition is for but little. The sermon on the mount is little, but the last dedication discourse was an hour. Life is made of littles; death is what remains of them all. Day is made up of little beams and night is glorious with little stars.

MISS PENELOPE GRANTLEY.

BY CATHERINE EARNSHAW.

I WAS leaning over the counter, absorbed in looking at a card photograph I held in my hand. A profile face of a girl, showing in its beautiful gray eyes, its brows and abundant dark hair that in short curly locks touched the forehead, the exquisite womanliness of the original, while the firm-cut chin revealed the indomitable energy and perseverance of her who sat for the picture. In the whole face was attractiveness and talent. I was a girl of the same years, and since I had first seen this woman, a queen in the profession she had chosen, she had been my divinity.

"What, another one! O, what a devotee!" exclaimed a voice behind me.

I knew the voice well, and replied without turning my head:

"You would not speak in that tone, if I were collecting different expressions of your face."

The handsome dark face had bent nearer when he spoke again in a low tone, with a laugh bubbling in his words:

"Of course not, dear; it is a woman's privilege to cherish every passing look of the man who is to be her husband."

"It is not my intention, however," I said, acrimoniously, turning and looking at John Tremaine, the man who had spoken, and whom I had promised to marry. It must have been more his beauty with which I had fallen in love than his kindly heart, his versatile gifts, for I was not handsome or gifted.

A slight rustle of silk the other side of me. I had not thought but what it was a stranger, though I saw mischief in John's eyes.

"Magnificent!" cried a mocking silvery voice, whose owner I knew was looking over at the picture. "A woman's rights woman, isn't it, who holds people entranced by a 'silvery-tongued eloquence?' I've heard of her."

I interposed a shoulder, shutting off her view. Foolishly sensitive, I was vexed. Besides, the speaker was a stranger to me, though by John's face I saw he knew her, and that she had come into the picture-

store with him. I hoped they were acting rudely enough.

"Will you be kind enough to allow me to present my cousin to you?" asked John, laughing at my vexation.

I turned round, and saw a little figure most bewitchingly arrayed, in such a manner that I couldn't tell where a ribbon was fastened, nor what made her mantle hang in such a careless way—a way which would only have been the prelude of falling off on my shoulders.

"Penelope Grantley," said John, "in other words, Pen Grant. She came in town last night, and we are on our way to call upon you."

I bowed to Pen. Grant, and looked at her. She had a small, irregularly-featured face, fresh clear complexion, green-gray eyes, scarlet lips—and I did not like her.

"Envelop your sixth addition to the Dillingham gallery, and we will proceed to your house," said John, bending to look again at my picture.

We turned toward the door, and Miss Grantley said:

"I suppose our wise gentleman here thinks it's a dignified thing in him to have a row a yard long of Maggie Mitchells in every attitude Fanchon ever tried; then his highness laughs at you for the Miss Dillingham gallery."

"What a trial are one's kindred, Pen," cried John, as we walked rapidly up the street, "especially the feminine branch. You have disclosed a secret—I was intending to give that series of pictures to this young lady here, for she is a worshipper at the shrine of Maggie Mitchell."

I cast a grateful glance at John, in answer to his words, and would have liked to send an angry one at his cousin for telling me, and thus depriving me of the pictures, for I knew I should not get them now. Perhaps she knew it, also.

I stepped off the sidewalk and made a rapid step to cross the street, with characteristic heedlessness of the carriages coming, trusting in my expertness to avoid the span of grays that were dashing on. A lithe-

some figure sprang after me, none too soon. He could not snatch me back, he could only catch the horse's head and jerk the pair up from their prancing trot, while I sped back to the pave again, ashamed of my carelessness, and frightened lest John should come to harm.

He came back with a pale face, and extended his hands, encased in light-colored mauve kids, for the man was something of a dandy. The gloves were soiled and torn.

"O my Alexandres!" he cried, but his eyes dwelt tenderly on my face. A word of heartfelt thanks rose to my lips, but the graceful figure of Miss Grantley came between, and with hand on his arm, she murmured with dulcet concern:

"Are you hurt? You are pale! I thought I saw that terrible horse's hoofs hit you."

"They came near, but they did not hurt—only left a mark of the soil on my habiliments, as you see," looking down at the muddy stains.

It was not the words alone that the girl used, it was the tone that saturated them, that made me hate her, then and there. Had I been wise and politic, I should not have allowed any unenviable expression to have appeared. The word my heart had prompted I could not utter, and I turned away, and felt Miss Grantley's soft warm fingers on my hand, and heard her voice:

"See Cousin John's face; did you do that to try your power? Be satisfied, then; his color is but just returning."

"Pshaw!" cried John, and we walked on; and I know he was feeling irritated that he had betrayed any emotion, that his cousin had noticed it. I listened in silence to Miss Grantley's talk. John gradually warmed into interest in it, and when we reached the door of my house, the two were laughing gayly. Indeed, I could not choose but be silent, for Pen Grant had chosen subjects connected with their childhood, of which I was ignorant.

John rang the bell at my door.

"What a chivalrous fellow you were in those days," Pen said, as we waited.

"And is that adjective inapplicable now?" he asked.

She looked prettily regretful, and said with a laugh:

"I suppose not—only you are my knight no longer, you know."

My heart throbbed faster as I saw a flush stain John's cheek.

A servant opened the door, and we entered. I was proud of my home, of the exquisite taste with which my father had made beautiful his abode. The beauty was not lost upon the eyes of Miss Grantley; they sparkled as she glanced rapidly but comprehensively about her.

"Where is the lamp?" she whispered at my elbow.

I looked round inquiringly:

"The everlasting one of Aladdin, do you mean?"

"Of course. What other could do it?" she said.

"It is in my father's pocket," I replied.

"What a happy mortal you are!" she said, in a low voice, as we entered the room where my mother sat.

My mother received her with that tinge of distant stateliness which was usual to her reception of strangers, but it did not discompose Pen Grant; she was just as suave and gay, with that sparkle of childishness that appeared in unison with her dainty little figure.

"It is just lunch time," my mother said; "our table is ready; will you do us the favor of breaking bread with us?"

She assented with that apparent pleasure which so much enhances any consent. With a delicate shawl of some gossamer wool over her shoulders, slipping from one arm, revealing the golden circlet on the white wrist, Pen Grant sat at our table and ate salt with me. The fancy of the East came to my mind, and I felt like refusing thus to eat with her. I had many strange fancies about her that day.

"It is cold; you have had a long walk," said my mother; "we will have some wine. John will not refuse anything from my husband's cellar."

"The vintage is too rare for me to reject," he said.

"It is Amontillado—fragrant as June, sweet as August," John said, offering a glass to Pen, and placing one before me. "Your Scottish cellars never knew its superior, Pen; your bonnets of Bonnie Dundee would have nodded merrier than ever over this."

Pen smiled softly into her glass as she touched it to her lips.

"Are you Scotch?" I asked, in surprise.

"From the banks of Clyde," she said,

with an indescribable sudden assumption of Scotch accent that sounded prettily from her.

"I never thought it," I said; "it surprises me."

"And you did not discover it in the glint of her e'e, nor the bonnie shade of her brown hair?" laughed John.

"They told no tales," I responded.

"It may be because I did not allow them," she replied. "I have not seen my country since I was a child."

She bent over her glass with a retrospective look, her large white lids lowered, her full red lips curved in a suggestion of sadness. She was not beautiful in face; how was it then, that she had so much the air of a handsome woman?

"The exile has thoughts of home?" said John, softly. "We of your adopted country shall be jealous."

She looked up brightly.

"Not ye who live in this country of my love," she said. "The new home has been kinder to me than the old one."

This reference to some grief or trouble seemed not in good taste to me. I could not have thus spoken in the presence of strangers. I thought John must think so, also; I glanced at him, and saw that he was thinking only of the sweetness of her voice, the melody infused by the sorrow.

But she quickly threw aside that expression, and chatted upon the current topics of the city, throwing into the hackneyed things a sort of freshness that might have been taken for the naïve candor of a child, but which I, it may be unamiably, decided to be the studied art of the woman. Not that I usually disliked such art, but in her I felt that it was the mask of falsehood.

From that day there seemed some sort of a glamour over my eyes; I could think of no pleasure without a shadow of evil or disappointment. The sunlight had in it gleams of a pair of strange-colored eyes. It was not all a foolish fancy of mine, though it might have been that I exaggerated everything that I saw, for a while, at least. Sensitive, with a proud shyness, I could not choose but grow colder and more disagreeable as I saw John wait for Pen's smile, listen for her voice. I do not know whether he noticed it—I am certain that she did not appear to see any difference in our manner. When John and I were alone together, he was the same as he used to be in those days

that now appeared so far away to me; but I could not be. With some fragment of a glittering sweet dream leaving me every day, I could not wear such happy eyes as when that dream was the only reality of my life. O, why do dreams appear so real! It was bitter that John, who had so noticed every changing expression of my face or manner, saw nothing different.

Miss Grantley had taken up her abode in her cousin's home. She came often with John to see me; we went to many places of amusement together. Oftentimes John did not come when he would once have done so.

One day we were invited to the country residence of a friend. The house was a large stone mansion on the Merrimac in New Hampshire. By some freak unaccountable to their city friends, the Melbournes had spent the winter in the country, and March sunshine found them there.

It was a warm day, with yellow sunlight pouring over the fields and the patches of snow, coming down warmly on the icy river. We were driven up the approach under the bare-limbed trees. It seemed to me as if I could almost see and feel the thrill of the trees at the touch of such a sun.

"The ice stays long," said Pen, looking towards the glistening river that flowed within a few rods of the house. "I hope we shall be here when the ice breaks up. Did you ever see it?" turning to me.

"Never. I never lived by a river."

Pen leaned forward and touched the arm of her cousin.

"What have I said? What chord have I jarred?" she asked, in a low voice.

John's dark eyes met the soft look of the gray ones; though I was looking away, I saw it, and I knew what string had vibrated sorrowfully.

"It was before you came," he said. "You knew that my elder brother Ronald died, but you did not know how. He was drowned in the Merrimac one March day like this. I saw him go down among the blocks of ice, and I had no power to help him."

"My dear cousin!"

The low-breathed words thrilled to the heart of the man. I knew his face too well not to know that. Pen's eyes misted with sympathy.

The carriage stopped at the door, John sprang out and assisted us to alight. His fingers clung to the hands of his cousin—

that small white false hand which I knew he longed to kiss. I saw this, though I was springing up the steps to greet our hostess, who had appeared at the door.

"Who is she?" she exclaimed, glancing down at the figure alighting from the carriage.

"Miss Grantley, Mr. Tremaine's cousin."

"O, the lady of whom my husband spoke when he mentioned the invitation he gave you. With more beauty she would be a Vivien to any Merlin."

The keen eyes of Mrs. Melbourne saw her as I had seen. The next moment she had greeted the two, and was ushering us into the house. The morning wore on, and a warm south mist came between us and the sun—a yellowish mild fog that made the soiled snow sink rapidly away. There was a little party at the house; they were very merry, but I thought Pen was a little quiet, a trifle cold. John lingered by my side, a glance wandering now and then to where his cousin sat languidly conversing with a gentleman. Her eyes and voice appeared doubly feline to me at that moment, so velvety were they. She caught my look and answered it with a smile.

"I hate her," I said, behind the smile with which I listened to what some one was saying to me.

After dinner I did not see Pen. We were strolling through the rooms, looking at pictures, at books, at a thousand pretty things wealth can collect in a home. An hour passed, and she did not return.

"Where is your cousin?" I asked of John, noting his impatient looks toward the door.

"Our cousin," he smiled down at me, evidently glad of the opportunity of speaking of her. "I do not know. I am afraid she is fatigued. She has not appeared since dinner."

A loud sullen report stopped the reply I was intending to make. It was unlike any sound I had ever heard, yet I knew instantly what it was, and was glad that I was by the Merrimac this March day.

"The river!" exclaimed Mrs. Melbourne. "Let us go down to the bank and see the struggle of ice and water. I thought this warm fog must conquer to-day."

I looked at John.

"Come," he said, then glanced round for Pen.

We walked down through the field at the

back of the house, the rush and roar of the unbound ice filling the air.

"I do not see Miss Grantley," said Mrs. Melbourne, to me. "Where is she?"

"I do not know," I replied; and a lady near said:

"She complained of a headache, and said she would go out for fresh air. She also remarked that she felt sure the river would break up this warm day, and she believed she would walk down to the bank."

"Ah, in that case, we shall probably meet her," responded Mrs. Melbourne, and moved on to join some one else.

I felt some coming evil. Could Pen be so foolish as to expose herself to any danger? I knew that she was rash and thoughtless as regarded any physical danger—an unusual trait for one like her, and which had surprised me much. An apprehensive pallor had spread itself over John's face; he walked in silence by my side. I knew that he, too, felt a presentiment of ill.

Huge blocks of ice went plunging down, battling, clashing with one another. Sometimes a tree, fragments of fences or sheds bounded along with the ice. On one great gray-white piece of ice I saw two sheep standing close together, looking helplessly and pathetically at us as they passed, only a few yards from us. The ice had not been long enough parted to have gathered much impetus in comparison with what would soon be. The main bodies of ice were hardly yet broken.

"I can't bear it! I wonder where Pen is! This river is hateful!" exclaimed John, turning from it, and looking back to the house. "Let us return—I do not believe she would stay down at the bank."

"I will go if you wish; but I think she would stay to see the ice break."

I turned back with him—he half paused—"Do you? Let's find her."

I was angry with her for such a freak. I looked up the stream. From where the rest of the party stood, their view up the stream was obstructed by a large knoll covered with stunted pines. We were a little nearer the house, and could see a bend in the river which was not in their range.

"John, there is Pen, on that bridge."

It was a bridge built particularly strong to withstand this spring violence of the water—it had withstood many a freshet. There was terror in John's face.

"This river is fatal to me," he said, in a

suppressed voice, "but it shall not have her." And he darted off along the bank.

The bridge was not a quarter of a mile distant. I remained where he had left me, and saw him spring upon the bridge and reach her side. She turned her face toward him. I knew well what the expression of that face must be. He put his arm round her, and bent his head so that his dark hair mingled with the light brown, and I knew how *his* eyes looked. He drew her toward the bank. Just then another muttering boom shook the air; a rush of some resistless monster, and the bridge parted like a toy, and the water leaped through. With Pen held fast to him, John sprang to reach the shore—but just one instant too late—the bridge broke from its hold to the bank, and the part on which they stood went swimming down the river.

It was nevermore my John Tremaine that stood there clasping with such passionate embrace the girl with him. That thought flashed through my fear for them. The fragment of the bridge floated out nearer the middle of the river. John's head was erect, his eyes searching for any escape.

They came in sight of the party on the bank, for I heard their cry of dismay and surprise. I left my position to gain one from which I could see the two, but I avoided the company, for there was that in my soul which could not well brook words or eyes. Was it love? Since he was not mine now, could he ever have been? If it was not love, it was pain, agony unutterable.

An immense block of ice floated between them and the bank. John leaped with Pen in his arms, and stood the next mo-

ment on the slippery surface. The block was near the shore.

"Try the leap! It is your only chance!" cried one of the men of the party.

I saw John measuring the distance, and watching for the chance. The ice swayed nearer and nearer the shore. Pen leaned on his arm, pale, motionless, but not insensible. A vigorous elastic leap—the sinewy frame reached the shore, and John dropped on his knees by the now inanimate form of Pen. Exhausted and pallid though he looked, his burning eyes devoured the face of the girl. He would let no one else hold the cordial to her lips. It was his glance that met hers when her eyes opened.

"Thank God!" his white lips murmured.

An hour later, as I passed through the hall, I looked in at the parlor where I thought Pen was lying alone on a sofa. She was not alone. Bending over her was John Tremaine.

"Be still!" he said, in passionate tones. "I tell you I love you! I will know nothing but that love. Ah, have I not earned this right—this, that I have so long coveted?"

He stooped and pressed his lips lingeringly to her mouth. I saw her face—it was not the face of a loving woman, but it was the face of a triumphant one.

I walked on. Those days were fiery ones for me—but it was better to live them, than to have married John Tremaine.

If the man lives whom I shall ever marry, I hope his face will never bear that constant look of a hope lost, a heart misunderstood, a passion burnt out, which lurks in the face of Penuel Grant's husband.

MISS ANDERSON'S RIGHT HAND.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

CHAPTER VII.

AMY went home, nerved to the desperate mood required to meet her father's anger, and determined to explain clearly her determination to abide by the lover of her own choice. She found her mother alone, however. A note had arrived but a few minutes before, for Mr. Atherton from Miss Anderson, and he had obeyed its summons with proud satisfaction, and rolled away in the stately brouche, almost too important and dignified to condescend to give his wife an explanation.

"Miss Anderson wishes to consult with me on an important topic. Of course! of course! I always told you my judgment and sagacity would one day be appreciated. Undoubtedly she wishes my advice about some investment. She is acute and sensible, remarkably sensible; in fact, I may say the only woman of my acquaintance whose character has any depth at all. Maria, I do wish that you would see that my clothes are in better order. The dust is an inch thick on this coat. Give it a good brushing; and put some cologne on that handkerchief. You don't say you've used that whole bottle! Never touched it! that is likely! who has, then? When did you ever know me to use cologne? And O dear! my black kids, where can they be? Look in that sack coat. No? then in the light overcoat, or in the satin vest. Was there ever a man so tried? In the name of common sense what is a wife good for, if not to look after these things? I should like to know what you do with yourself all the time I am slaving at the bank? If you could only learn to have a little faculty, but I suppose it's no use to hope for it. O, you've found one glove in the pocket. Where have you dropped the other? I shall have to take these purple ones. Will you be so good as to get that coat brushed, or must I come to it?"

This was the tirade mumbled, or sneered, or shouted all the while the lord of the mansion was dressing for his call. And the poor frightened nervous wife, hurried from one thing to another, secretly in agony all the

while, because she was made aware by the odor that the coffee was burning instead of roasting on the stove, and yet not daring to go to it, was left all in a flutter of perturbation and distress.

Amy guessed what would be the result of the interview with Miss Anderson, and coaxed her mother away to bed, meaning to spare her the first wrath of the storm, knowing so well her father's habit of visiting upon that meek unoffending head whatever anger might have been aroused, though from never so remote a cause. She sat up herself to let him in, her sweet face steeled to a desperate bravery. But when he came, he gave her one withering, annihilating glance, snatched the lamp from her hand, and walked up stairs, leaving her standing discomfited. She began to weep softly, and then burst into a nervous laugh, and crept softly to her bed.

Only a little while, and she heard a low murmur from the chamber on the other side of the hall, swelling louder and louder till the voice was downright savage and snarling. She raised herself from her pillow and listened, as she had often done before, with burning indignant eye, and sickened aching heart. That was one of Mr. Graham Atherton's pet traits, to spend an hour or two inventing all the low spite, and ill temper, and smothered evil of the day upon the innocent and hapless victim who was tied to him by more wearing fetters than the chain of slavery. Then, having satisfied his spite, the "clever, jolly, good-natured fellow," as he was known among acquaintances in town, would turn over comfortably on his pillow, and fall into a sweet and placid slumber, while the poor weary wife, stabbed through and through by his harsh words and deadly sarcasm, would lie shedding her noiseless tears of bitterness, and counting the slow dragging moments until morning ushered her into another day of drudgery and care.

"Cowardly! contemptible!" ejaculated Amy, wiping away the hot flood of tears rushing to her eyes; "why did he not visit

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his wrath upon me? He knows she is in no way connected with the matter. Poor mother! poor mother! O, how horrible, this disgust and anger which I cannot help, toward my own father."

She confronted her father in the morning at the breakfast-table, with a face as stern as his own, and the poor frightened wife looked from one to the other, and could scarcely hold back the tears from rolling down her cheeks, as she poured out the coffee in the midst of that chilling silence.

Amy made no attempt at eating her breakfast, but composedly drank her coffee. Mr. Atherton never allowed anger or any other emotion to interfere with his enjoyment of a good meal. He waited, therefore, until he had finished his last cup of coffee, and pushed back his plate. He did not roll up his napkin and restore it to the ivory ring. Graham Atherton was never guilty of so orderly an act as that. He could afford to be careless, because a patient slave followed around to remove boots from the middle of the floor, hats from sofa, chair and table, newspapers, pens, knife, pencils, from every possible out-of-place spot where he chose to drop them. But he pushed back his plate, rose from his chair, and said, in a stern short tone, turning his ireful face upon Mrs. Atherton:

"Madam, have you delivered to this promising daughter of yours the message I gave you?"

Mrs. Atherton moved her lips, but was too agitated to make her words audible.

Amy spared her further attempt.

"She began to tell me something, but I would not listen. When I am at hand myself, I prefer that you should tell me what you have to communicate."

"Really, your majesty is very condescending! what royal manners you have acquired! You took lessons probably of that beggarly mechanic, Mary Creyton's bastard son," sneered Mr. Atherton.

The fire leaped into Amy's eye, the hot crimson flashed over her cheek, yet she mastered her anger.

"You may forget that you are speaking to a lady, and your own daughter; but I will try to remember that you are my father," said she, in clear cold accents.

Her poor weak mother looked over to her, marvelling at this brave show in the girl she had known hitherto as timid and shrinking as herself. She did not understand how

Amy's love for Charlie Creyton had changed the girl into a woman, and imparted, likewise, some of his brave steadfast spirit into her own.

"I wish you would remember that you are a lady, and not make me blush at your low tastes, your disreputable connections," exclaimed Mr. Atherton, angrily, yet quailing a little before those steady eyes, for he was a coward at heart, as are all domestic tyrants, try them when and how you will.

"Explain yourself," said Amy, "if you please."

"You know what I mean well enough; none of your airs, girl! I am ashamed of you. If any one but Miss Anderson had told me, I should have declared it a foul lie. Amy Atherton, don't you know that you are to marry Ray Dexter?"

"Father," answered Amy, her voice faltering for the first time, "have you any real love for your daughter? If you have, do not seek to drive me into this marriage which I abhor and detest."

"You do not love Ray? Why, I should like to know? Every girl in town will envy you. You yourself were pleased enough with him until this villain, this baseborn cur, in some strange way which passes all our comprehensions, cast his spell upon you."

"It is the spell of honest manhood. I grant you it is rare. I do not blush for my love for Charlie Creyton, father. I shall never marry any one else, and all threat or persuasion is worse than useless," said Amy, still calmly, but her voice growing hoarse.

"You think you are sure of the Livingston fortune, but you are prettily mistaken. You can tell that villain he will be balked of his booty. Miss Anderson told me last night that she should certainly have married, but for her wish to give to you and her favorite friend the fortune she now enjoys. She assured me that in case of your refusal to marry Ray, she should at once accept a proposal still waiting for her decision, and without any compunction, cut you off entirely from that magnificent estate."

"I wish she would! From the depth of my heart I wish she would!" ejaculated Amy, fervently.

Mr. Atherton tore around the room like a madman.

"Poor worm! miserable fool!" shrieked he. "I tell you it shall not be. If I have to bind you hand and foot, and drag you to

the minister, you shall marry Ray Dexter."

"Is this a heathen country to allow such things! But even there I should protest against it. I should refuse to soil my soul with vows I could never keep," returned Amy, steadily, but her eyes filled with tears.

"I will break that obstinate temper of yours!" muttered Graham Atherton, setting his teeth, viciously. "It is you," he added, turning to his trembling wife, with a withering glance, "it is you who have taught this ungrateful girl her willfulness and obstinacy. I will teach the pair of you who is master and ruler of this family."

"Spare my mother any senseless reproaches," exclaimed Amy. "If I had not possessed a different spirit from hers, I should long ago have been cringing at your feet."

"Where you shall yet be, foolish perverse child! Do you think what a proud and enviable position you spurn? Recall all the luxury and grandeur of Lakeville, and then think of a poor farmhouse, and a husband who must blush every time he refers to his parents."

"A true man need never blush, except for his own sins and shortcomings," answered Amy, proudly; "and Charlie Creyton's character is as stainless as mine."

"Amy Atherton, I swear to you I will not let you throw yourself away upon that base wretch. There are two years yet before you can marry without my consent. I will lock you in your chamber. I will tie you down—and hold you back. You shall never marry him!"

"Well, sir, I cannot help that. I can bear it better than to live amidst the luxurious splendors of Lakeville, with Ray Dexter and Miss Anderson."

"I told Miss Anderson that you should marry Ray on the 5th of the next month. She has already, I presume, sent orders, as she promised, to New York for a bridal outfit. You will keep that promise of mine. Mark my word, miss, you will keep it, and thank me for saving you from the wretchedness of your own desires."

Saying which, Mr. Graham Atherton, for once in his life, found his own hat and gloves, and bounced out of the room, and left the house, slamming the door after him.

Mrs. Atherton rose and hurried to Amy's side, and the two, falling into each other's arms, wept their tears of sorrow and indignation.

Later there came an aristocratic visitor. Mrs. Atherton, spying the grand carriage just as the coachman was opening the door for the majestic figure, rushed in consternation to Amy's chamber, where the girl sat disconsolately revolving her troubles.

"Amy, O Amy! Miss Anderson has come! Shall I tell her you are ill? I don't care if she does see my faded dress. I'll keep her from you."

Amy had started from her seat, the color flushing over her pale cheeks.

"No, no, it will be foolish to postpone it. I may as well face it all bravely. If she asks for me, I will go down."

As she spoke, Amy shook down the crumpled folds of her cambric dress, smoothed her hair, and carefully cooled her tear-stained eyelids.

Mrs. Atherton had rushed away at the imperious summons of the bell. She came to the foot of the stairs, and called her daughter's name, and Amy immediately answered the summons.

Miss Anderson, even more gorgeously attired than usual, with a magnificent India shawl thrown over her stately shoulders, rose to meet her with a flattering smile.

"Dear little Amy! I have come to congratulate you, and bring my little token of friendly interest."

As she said this, without waiting for an interposing word, she swung open the lid of a little velvet case, and showed, resting on dainty white satin beds, a superb set of diamonds.

"You will wear them, darling, when you are married. I have sent for the bridal dress, and I assure you it will astonish all Crans-town. How happy we shall be at Lakeville! you and Ray will be my dear, dear children. O Amy, I am so pleased at this match."

Amy stood grave and pale, without a glance at the jewels.

"There is a mistake, Miss Anderson. I am very sorry that my father should have deceived you, as well as himself. I cannot marry Ray Dexter."

"Not marry Ray! O Amy Atherton! you will not be so cruel to me, to your fond indulgent father, and most of all to yourself."

How sweetly tender, and gently reproachful was the tone!

"If it is a disappointment to you, I am sorry," faltered Amy. "But it would be no kindness to Ray for me to marry him, loving another."

"Another! little Amy, you have wrought yourself into a girlish romantic fever. Am I right in believing that other to be—the illegitimate son of Mary Creyton who lives in that little old farmhouse at the other end of the town?"

Amy was nearly suffocated with proud indignation at the contemptuous tone, and she only bowed her assent.

Miss Anderson laughed gayly.

"Ah well, then there is no very serious opposition. Poor, dear little innocent! I understand all about it. Girls of your age always have one such fit of desperate romance. You picture him a grand heroic knight, a noble soul, persecuted and forlorn. You mean to be the compassionate angel to dawn upon his interesting, melancholy fate. Dear, dear! it is so odd where we women get such crazy notions. It will all pass away, my child. Some little event will come to dissipate the cloud which obscures your sight; the halo with which your vivid imagination invested him will fall off. You will see him as he is, and wonder at your infatuation. If this is all, Ray can afford to wait a little. I dare say it will not be long, for I hear evil reports of this person."

"They are false!" declared Amy, passionately.

"You will not think so by-and-by. Amy dear, just wait a little, and see for yourself, and don't judge your friends too harshly. Perhaps a quiet friendly statement of the case may help you to decide more speedily."

"No, nothing will change me," reiterated Amy.

"We will hope it may, at least," responded Miss Anderson, still very gently, and with a great show of forbearing patience. "Now, on the one hand, is the happy fulfillment of Squire Livingston's will. Ray made happy, your parents delighted, and really raised a whole grade in the social rank, myself your tender and loving friend, glad with your joy and Ray's, and heartily entering into all your plans. This for the others; for yourself, you will be the queen of a wide circle, the happy and honored mistress of a home you may make as happy as you please, the leader of whatever generous and wide-reaching scheme you may choose, kept down by no cramping deficiencies, weighed by no heavy trials, stinted by no biting poverty. Then for the contrast. Strip off the delusion of your romantic visions, and look at the matter candidly. The wife of a poor

mechanic, worse than that, of a man who, however he may succeed in business, must always stand without the pale of refined and select society. See yourself going through the daily drudgery of farmwork, forever debarred from the elevating, refining influences which a nature like yours requires. For, Amy, if this pleasant life I have promised myself, merging my own hopes and fears into Ray's and yours, is denied me, I shall marry at once; accept some one of the dozen suitors waiting my verdict, and make interests of my own. It really looks very perverse and obstinate in you, Amy, but I attribute it solely to this girlish romance. You will find out what he is, this young man, and return to your duty gracefully. But I declare, I have talked myself out of breath. Haven't I convinced you, darling?"

"Not at all," answered Amy, struggling for a smile, but making a miserable failure. "You have left out the argument that I love Charlie Creyton, and do not love Ray Dexter."

"I shall leave you to be convinced by reflection. And I suppose I can keep my diamonds then until another day. But I shall not countermand my orders for the *trousseau*. I am so confident how it will end, that you will make dear Ray happy."

"I wonder why you must all plead for Ray," said Amy, with a tremulous sigh. "Why does no one speak a word for honest honorable Charlie? What makes you like Ray so much, Miss Anderson?"

"Because he is worthy of my regard. He was always a pet with me, even when he was a child. I have adopted you both into my tenderest affections. You must not disappoint me, either of you. Now I must go."

"But not with any encouragement from me that I shall change my mind," persisted Amy.

Miss Anderson from under her drooping lashes flashed a furious angry glance, but her voice was still soft and tender.

"You will, I am sure you will, darling Amy. I shall bring you the diamonds shortly.—Good-bye, foolish darling!"

CHAPTER IX.

CHARLIE CREYTON left his shop the next evening in care of his workman, giving ample charges concerning the finishing of a job which Miss Anderson herself had ordered

several months before. He had taken a great deal of pride in the carving and design of the elaborate workstand, and had not meant any other hand should put the pieces together, or finish up the veneering. But he looked back now with angry contempt upon his proud satisfaction in seeing the great lady of the town walking about his shop. He smiled bitterly, recalling the air-castles he had built out of her patronage, the inflowing orders for fancy furniture increasing as he dwelt upon the thought, until he pictured himself the master of a large factory running night and day to supply the demands of his thriving business. The contrast stung him, and he could not bring himself to touch the work which had grown odious. He gave his apprentice, therefore, careful instructions about finishing the workstand, and closing the shop, went home earlier than his wont.

He had hardly disappeared around the corner of the street, when Mr. Austin Bradley crossed from his station on the other side, and came into the shop in a careless, lounging sort of way.

"Hallo, Ben, all alone? Then the master's off?"

"Yes sir, gone home, and left me to mind the glueing."

"What are you doing now?"

"This 'ere is a workstand for Miss Anderson. She ordered it a good piece back, but we had other work on hand."

"Quite a complicated affair. What are all those pigeon-holes for?"

"Land's sakes, I dunno. The boss got it up, and was mighty tickled with it at first. He said one day he had saved all the patterns, because he made sure there'd be a run of orders when folks saw the table finished."

"It's for Miss Anderson, is it?"

"Yes sir. She came herself, and told what she wanted. I b'lieve it's for a present to the housekeeper. The boss was mighty pleased at the time, and worked hard over the patterns, and wouldn't let me touch a single part of it. But it's all changed now. He's run out about the work, somehow. I'm to do all the finishing."

Mr. Bradley's keen eye twinkled.

"Humph! So he isn't interested in his work as he used to be?"

"No sirc, I can't make him out," answered Ben White, flattered at so unwonted an auditor, and feeling smart, and inclined

to show himself off. "He's grown queer, of late. He don't talk to me as he used to, nor whistle over his work, but every little while the saw will drop out o' his hand, and he will be standing gauping at nothing in the world, with his eyes fixed so queer. I've wanted to laugh, only I didn't dare."

"I dare say the poor fellow is in love," said Bradley, piling up the sawdust with his foot. "And, by the way, I'm hunting up pistols. I wonder if Creyton has got one."

"Yes sir—he had one, and it was allers on that shelf there. But it's been gone for two or three weeks. I know 'taint there," he added, as his auditor made a movement to visit the designated shelf, "'cause I asked him for it last week. He used to let me take it sometimes, but he didn't tell me what had become of it. He said something about its being stole."

"Did it have any mark on it? You're a bright, smart boy, Ben. I wonder I never noticed you before."

"Yes sir. He scratched 'C. C.' on the plate."

"Like this?" asked Mr. Bradley, taking out the bit of metal, and laying it before the boy on the bench.

"Why, that's the same piece! How in thunder—" he stopped abruptly, for something in the man's face startled him.

"Ben White, do you want to earn a pretty snug sum for a boy of your years, and further the cause of justice beside?" demanded the coroner, taking care to make his tone duly impressive.

"Why, yes sir—anything that's right—" stammered Ben, his coarse sandy hair beginning to rise a little in vague alarm.

"You board at the farmhouse with Mr. Creyton, don't you?"

"Yes sir."

"Could you examine his private room, possibly his closet and any other hiding-place there may be, and find that pistol, and tell me where it is? And mark you, take care to observe if the plate, which you say is like this, is gone. Could you do this and keep silent, to *every* one, you understand?"

"I suppose I could. I'm often to bed before him. And Miss Creyton never comes up stairs. If you say I oughter to do it."

"I do; no harm shall come to you. I give you my express instructions to that end."

"I know one thing that's in the closet

for I went to help Miss Creyton move out the woollen chest, and we lost the tongue of the lock, and I got a light to hunt for it, and there was a heap of shining gold pieces laying there in the dust with nothing but a paper over them," said Ben, growing garrulous.

"Don't touch one of them, but find out if the pistol is anywhere about, and see if the plate is gone from it. You will mind, Ben, about hinting a word or look to any living soul what is going on. The sooner you do it the better, and remember you leave the pistol where you find it."

"And if I don't find it?" quoth Ben, dubiously.

"You shall have the reward for trying, though nothing like what you will get for succeeding," answered Bradley, with a grim smile.

And thereupon he turned and walked out of the workshop.

Ben remained balancing himself on a sawhorse, and scratching his head for an explanation of the puzzle.

"By thunder! There's a row somewhere; I durst as I want to bring the boss into any trouble. But what's a feller to do when the 'thorities set him to work?"

He stirred himself presently, and finished his glueing, then with alacrity locked up the shop, and took the road toward the farm. On the way he met his employer.

"I'm going over to the village, Ben. Tell mother not to sit up for me. Is the shop locked?"

"Yes sir, all right."

"Give me the key, I may want to go in for something."

And Charlie, yearning for a sight of Amy, secretly resolved to go back and light up the shop. She came once before, why might she not again? At all events, he was too restless and nervous to remain quietly at home.

And Ben, quickening his steps, went on toward the farm, muttering:

"Now's my time. I'll tell Miss Creyton I'm tired, and go right off to bed."

Charlie did not see Amy. He spent a miserable hour of suspense, and then locked up the shop and walked down the street past Mr. Atherton's house, sauntering by slowly, hoping to catch a glimpse of her. He was somewhat startled when a fierce hand gripped his arm, and a wrathful voice hissed in his ears:

"You needn't come prowling around here, you baseborn beggar, you black-hearted scoundrel. My daughter is not for the like of you."

Charlie Creyton turned his pale face toward that of the infuriated father, but could not speak a word, he was so shocked and startled.

"You think to win the Livingstone fortune, but it will only be Amy's when she marries Ray Dexter. Base beggar! you will never touch a shilling of it. To think that you—you, should presume to aspire to a daughter of mine!"

And Graham Atherton struck a contemptuous hand against the young man's cheek, fairly beside himself with rage.

Charlie Creyton mastered himself with wonderful self-command. He stepped back a pace or two and folded his arms.

"Such violent language has no claim to reply," said he; "at least, whatever you choose to call me, I have sufficient respect for myself to abstain from using such in reply. Because you are Amy's father you have also a claim beyond what every man who has not forfeited his manhood deserves, decent treatment and a show of respect. If you will listen to me a moment—"

"But I will not; not an instant will I contaminate myself in your presence. Away with you! I tell you if I find you prowling around my house, I will horsewhip you away as I would drive off a dog. My daughter is to be married to Ray Dexter only a month from this day. That is enough for you to know. And now take yourself away!"

And while these words foamed over his lips, Mr. Atherton opened his gate, closed it with a heavy bang, and walked hurriedly into the house.

The young man threw behind him a glance of mingled anguish, and walked away, slowly at first, but gradually his pace quickened, and as he reached the pasture lands, he flew over the ground, as if driven by scorpion whips.

He unclosed the door softly, but his mother heard it, and came out to meet him, the candle in her hand. The rays fell upon his telltale face before he had time to smooth out its lines of care.

"Charlie," said she, "there is some trouble tormenting you. Come and tell your mother, my boy."

"What matter, dear mother, since they

are outside your circle of gentle ministrations? Had it been anything you could heal, I should have come to you long ago."

"Perhaps I have more power than you suspect," said she, with a smile, which was bolder and more confident than he had ever seen before. "What has troubled you—what has met you since you went away this evening?"

"I have been taunted, called a baseborn beggar!" exclaimed Charlie, suddenly breaking down. "O mother! mother! I try to bear it manfully, but it is very, very hard."

Mary Creyton sprang up before him, her pale sweet face lighted up with a jubilant grateful smile.

"Charlie," said she, a swift fierce indignation breaking through the smoothness of the tone, "you have borne that long enough. God be thanked, it is over now. I am absolved from my oath. The next man who casts that in your teeth, give him the lie. Tell him you are the child of woe, but lawful and honest wedlock, and send whom you will to me for the proof, the indisputable evidence of my marriage certificate, which is signed by one of the famous lights of the distant metropolis. He is alive still, Heaven again be praised!"

"Mother! mother!" exclaimed Charlie, in wild amazement, "is it possible? Say it again, O blessed, blessed assurance! Now I can face anything, everything!"

Poor fellow! he stood there looking so brave and heroic, so grand and glad; how little he dreamed of the thunderbolt already forged, which Ben White was that very moment kindling to the white heat of explosion, as he crept stealthily into the coroner's yard.

"But, mother, darling mother, why have you kept it so long? How could you bear this injustice, this horrible, horrible disgrace?"

"Because I was innocent, my boy. Otherwise I would have killed me. And I promised, I took a solemn oath to hide it. But I was miserably deceived, and your father—O Charlie, Charlie! it will make your heart bleed and your blood boil to hear how foully he was wronged. Wait a little, only a little, and you shall have his name, and bear it proudly before the world. But I must keep the rest for a little longer."

Charlie caught her in his arms, kissed her again and again, and at last dropped

his manly head upon her shoulder, and broke into a relieving flood of tears.

"Charlie," whispered Mary Creyton, "let me thank you now for your delicate chivalrous generosity toward the mother you believed guilty of so grievous a wrong. O my noble boy, I have faith to believe what has been taken from your parents will be restored to you a hundred fold, honor, and wealth, and the world's good-will, yet best and beyond all, the approbation of Heaven."

They kept late hours that night. It was so sweet for Mary to hold up her poor bowed head, and to see the deep joy in her boy's loving eyes. And Charlie was in such a ferment of astonishment and rejoicing, planning, projecting, longing for the morrow's interview with Amy, which he meant to accomplish, though the house were surrounded with roaring lions and fiery dragons.

Presently they heard a fumbling hand at the outer door.

"It is Ben. He went to bed, but came down again with an aching tooth. He wanted to go over to the apothecary, and I told him to go," said Mary, quietly.

Charlie rose to open the door. Yes, Ben was there, but cowering and sneaking behind two broad-shouldered men.

"Good-evening, Mr. Creyton," said the voice of Marshall the constable, and behind him walked Bradley.

The two men stepped briskly inside the door. Charlie instinctively made way for them, and bit his lip nervously.

"We want to go up to your chamber a moment. I have a search-warrant," said the first officer.

Like one stupefied, Charlie bent his head, and handed them the candle.

"If you have no objection, we should like your company," observed Mr. Bradley, glancing significantly at the outer door. Still dumb and dazed, Charlie stumbled on before them, and sat down in the chair by the head of the bed. Ben answered Mr. Bradley's whisper, and the latter walked into the closet, and came out in a moment, the pistol in one hand, the heap of shiving coin in the other.

He walked up to his confederate, who looked at them carefully, counting the money, and putting down the memoranda in his book. Mr. Bradley then produced the plate from his pocket with those initials

on it, and the two men looked eagerly on it as it was fitted exactly in its old place.

Charlie Creyton watched too, and so did his mother, who had followed him up stairs, amazed at these strange proceedings. The constable came forward, and laid his hand on the young man's shoulder.

"Charles Creyton, in the name of the law I arrest you for the murder of the hermit of the lake!"

Mary Creyton rushed forward with a wild cry.

At last Charlie was roused from his apathy. He rose to his feet, shook himself as a lion might shake his mighty frame, suddenly released from an iron cage. His eye shone fearless and bright, his lip curled proudly and scornfully.

"It is one thing to arrest, and another thing to prove evidence sufficient for an indictment. Mother dear, set your fears at rest. I shall come back to you shortly."

"Young man," said Bradley, sternly, "this gold is part of a large sum paid by a distant bank to that unfortunate man."

"Well," said Charlie's clear cold voice.

"This plate fitting to your pistol was found in the dust at the cabin door. The fatal bullet matches these."

"Well."

"You were seen going across the pasture toward the lake, and in the moonlight

clearly recognized. There are half a dozen other proofs, one fitting to another in an unusually clear fashion. What do you say to that?"

"That I am not concerned. That I defy you still," answered Charlie, scornfully.

Mr. Bradley shook his head gravely as he returned:

"It is evidence enough to hang a man, that is all. Come, we must take you away with us."

Mary Creyton rushed forward and threw her arms around her son.

"Let me look into your face, Charlie."

He smiled tenderly beneath the searching glance.

"Innocent, innocent!" cried she, fervently; and bending her head, she whispered something in his ear.

He started, and flushed crimson.

"Good heavens! how much you have explained that was utterly mysterious. Good-by, for a little while, dear mother. You need not fear for me."

And between the two officers he was marched away to the village. Despite his brave show of confidence, when he was left alone, his head dropped on his breast, and his face was dark with troubled thought.

"Supposing he is not found, what will become of me?" muttered Charlie Creyton.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MISS ANDERSON'S RIGHT HAND.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

CHAPTER X.

THE great house at Lakeville was all ablaze with light, when Coroner Bradley walked up the avenue to fulfil his promise to Miss Anderson, and inform her that there had really been evidence enough discovered to warrant the arrest of young Creyton, and that he was safely lodged under the constable's care. He had promised to communicate with her immediately after the arrest, but had not intended to visit her until the next morning, owing to the lateness of the hour. But in passing along the highway, at the rise of the hill, he saw the house lighted from basement to attic, and immediately turned his steps toward it, wisely concluding it was best to take the lady at her word.

Miss Anderson was in the midst of her guests, a smiling brilliant woman of fashion, but she came promptly into the library, where Mr. Bradley was shown upon his entrance.

Coming from the dim room where he left the grave pale-faced prisoner, from the simple home of Mary Creyton, no wonder Mr. Bradley put up a hand to shield his dazzled eyes, as Miss Anderson, in her brilliant evening dress, floated in to him.

"What a magnificent creature!" was his first inward ejaculation, and in a moment more, he added, "what inimitable skill in dress!"

The lady stood up before him in careless grace, yet all the while enjoying his surprise and admiration, and willing to give him time to gratify it.

Simple untutored Mr. Bradley had never before been made aware of the fascinating witchery of a costly and exquisite toilet. His curious, delighted eye took in every detail, from the floating waves of rose-colored tulle, festooned here and there, from a glossy white satin underskirt, by the bouquets of milky white lilies, with crystal pendants like wavering dewdrops, scintillating at every movement she made, to the frosty intricacy of berthe and sleeves, marvels each

from some rare foreign lace-maker's costly store. Lilies and dewdrops nestled at her breast, amidst lace and satin, and on either side the stately head, amidst the lustrous waves of dusky hair, bloomed a single blossom, dazzling in its gleaming whiteness, and linked by a chain of diamonds. Haughty throat, and still fair and gracefully-moulded arms, each bore their circlet of gems and gold, and the dainty fan, and the snowy satin slipper, each held its tiny jewels, strown wherever lavish art could find a place.

Poor Mr. Bradley sat still and stared, as at a royal princess, quite forgetting what he had come to tell. She did not hurry him, but ringing the bell, ordered a glass of wine, and a plate of cake for him, and stood herself, slowly sipping spoonful by spoonful of a strawberry cream.

"I suppose you came to say something about that unfortunate affair, as you promised you would," said she, sweetly, when at length he seemed emerging from his daze of wondering admiration. "My poor little sunshade, I shall never use it again, not for the world! To think that it should go hunting up evidences that had better have laid quiet forever."

"Nay, it is always a righteous deed which furthers the ends of justice. Craustown cannot afford to have an unmolested murderer in its midst."

She started nervously, and shuddered.

"Murderer! O Mr. Bradley, that is a dreadful word! Pray don't use it again. You really can't mean it."

"We have arrested Charlie Creyton. The pistol was found in his chamber."

"In his chamber! how very strange," said Miss Anderson, slowly, with a genuine look of perplexed wonder on her face.

"And more than that, the plate was missing, and the one you found fits exactly into its place," he continued, eagerly.

"Wretched youth! can it be possible that he committed that terrible deed!" And Miss Anderson stood before him, her gloved

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hands clasped, her black eyelashes drooping down upon her cheek, her face full of melancholy grief.

"It is morally impossible for it to be otherwise. The crime was committed for gold. We found quite a sum in the identical coin proved to have been delivered to the hermit, in the closet with the pistol."

"Then you believe him really guilty?"

"Of course I do. There is positive evidence of it."

"But a jury may discover discrepancies," said she, musingly.

"No indeed, I never knew a clearer case. There is no question of it. He will be convicted."

"And be sent to prison for the rest of his life. O, wretched, wretched boy!"

"It is not manslaughter, madam, but murder. He will undoubtedly be hung," said the coroner, emphatically.

Those thick jetty lashes hid the tiger gleam of joy in the cold eyes, where the hypocritical voice said, sorrowfully:

"It is very sad. Is the mother in reduced circumstances? I must go and see if I can help her any. For you see, Mr. Bradley, I feel quite guilty, so terribly guilty that it was my sunshade which ferretted out that fatal bit of metal."

"You give yourself undeserved reproach, my dear Miss Anderson. Rather congratulate yourself that you are the instrument of bringing wickedness to light."

"But about the trial. Must I go? Pray, if it is possible, get me off. You stood by and saw it all; why must I have anything to do with it?"

"You will only corroborate my statement, a very simple matter, which every one will be pleased to render as little annoying as possible."

"Perhaps something may transpire to change it all," said Miss Anderson, hopefully.

"Nay, that is most improbable."

"Well, there is time enough for me to tremble, without making myself unhappy to-night. And my guests are missing me. Call and see me again, Mr. Bradley. Shan't I give you another glass of wine before you go?"

"Thank you, you have already been very generous. I should hardly have ventured here at so late an hour, but that I saw the house illuminated."

"I have a party of friends from town.

General H—— and his lady, the honorable governor, and one or two of his council, and a foreign diplomat or so. Good-night."

Mr. Bradley bowed himself out of sight of the magnificent woman, feeling as honored as if he had just left a throne-room.

Miss Anderson went back to her guests, fairly radiant, her pale cheeks, though they lacked blush tints, yet somehow glowed through their pallor, from the exultant throbbing of the proud imperious heart, her vivid lips wreathed with smiles, her stately head carried with more haughty grace than before.

Ray Dexter was among the guests, and hovering over a coquettish city belle with the utmost devotion. The hostess managed to draw him aside, and whisper:

"Take care, Ray, Kate Owen is only playing with you. Don't let her think that you can be caught by such transparent snares. And mind you commit yourself to no one. You belong to some one else, you know."

Ray looked discontentedly into the fond smiling face, and asked:

"To whom, I should like to know? You won't accept me."

"But Amy shall!" returned she, with earnest tone.

"She is past fathoming. I really believe, Miss Anderson, she will be stubborn to the end. That fellow has succeeded in bewitching her."

"That fellow" is safely out of our way!" returned Miss Anderson, with fierce exultation. "What do you think Mr. Bradley came to tell but now? That this Creyton has been arrested for that murder."

"What murder?" ejaculated Ray, in utter amazement.

"There has been but one, has there?" said she, in as pettish a tone as she ever used to him.

"The poor old hermit! Good heavens, what motive could he have had?"

"You seem anxious to doubt it," retorted she, still more sharply.

"Why, I confess, I am amazed. It seems so improbable," replied Ray, shrinking a little at the glimpse he caught of her glittering eyes.

She saw it, and hastened to reply, carelessly:

"I know nothing about it beyond what Mr. Bradley tells me, that the hermit's gold has been found in his possession, and that the proofs are such no one can doubt his

guilt. I confess, for all the horror of the thought, I could not help rejoicing that Amy's eyes would discover his baseness. We may count upon a speedy wedding, Ray."

"How anxious you are for my marriage to some one else," said the spoiled favorite, with a perverse glance into her eager face. "If it were you, I should be ready to curse the flight of time, rather than watch joyfully for your wedding-day."

She tried to smile in careless gayety, but the effort was a failure.

"Is it wrong in me to be nervously anxious for you to be safely settled here?" asked she, in a deep passionate voice.

"No, to be sure it is not," glancing around the elegant rooms with intense satisfaction. "And I ought to wish for it, too. And since the only method is by coming in company with that foolish girl, so be it."

"Now I must give the signal for supper. General H—— will take me down, and you, Ray, must escort his lady. Be amiable now, and discreet."

"I bow to your commands, fairest, where all are fair!" replied Ray, kissing his hand to her.

It was a gay evening, and not until after midnight was the house quiet again, and the company dispersed, the guests in their chambers, and the tired servants resting from their busy cares.

Felice had disrobed her mistress of her rich evening-dress, and wrapped the dressing-gown around her, and then thankfully retired to her couch.

Miss Anderson, however, had no mind for sleep. Her eye burned brightly, undimmed by all the revel. She was hot and fevered with inward excitement, and opening a window, she drew forward the easy-chair, and sat down beside it. The room was dim, for she had extinguished all the candles but one, and the whole house was still and quiet. Leaning back her head, and folding her arms, Miss Anderson resigned herself to the misery of solitary self-communion.

The eagerness of thought would not leave her lips quiet; they moved restlessly, their scarlet lines curving with slow smiles, or drawn down with evil sneers. Presently the thoughts within bubbled over into speech.

"So far I am safe! So far my plans mature beyond even my wildest hopes. But O, how slow the fruition of these years of waiting and watching! I think these inward fires are wearing me out. I was so

proud once of my strong will, my iron endurance, and now every little opposition chafes me into fury, frets me almost to madness. I do not sleep either, as I used. O, what a relief when I am safe and can rest! It cannot be long, for events mature rapidly, and all favorably, all but the girl's obstinacy. But that will surely be conquered now. She will not care to follow her lover to the scaffold. To think it should be he of all others, to mar my plans. If he had dreamed what it would cost to cross my path! Yet it is safer and better so, father and son, securely out of my light, out of Ray's path! Better so, better so! It was the only way."

But while she spoke, she lifted her right arm, and looked, half askance, with a wild eerie terror in her eyes, at the hand—that fair right hand, which always seemed such a source of mingled dread and warning to her. And as she gazed, the dark shadow overspread her eyes, and crept along her face, leaving it horror-struck, and of deadly whiteness, and in a moment the lips, those matchless crimson lips, grew stiff, and of a dull frozen blue, drawing away from the pearly teeth with an expression almost idiotic. For a moment the spell was upon her, and she sat there, cowering like a lost spirit in the presence of its judge, unable to move or speak.

Then with a desperate effort, she roused herself, gasping frightfully while the flecks of foam specked her lips, and tottered to her feet, clasping both hands to her head. She rushed across the room, poured out a glass of wine into a slender crystal bauble, spilling half of it over the silver salver on which the decanter stood, and using the left hand, raised it to her mouth and drank, with frantic convulsive gasps between each swallow. The color drifted slowly but steadily back to her lips, the glaze of horror died off from her eyes, her face returned to its natural expression, and sinking nerveless and powerless into a chair, she exclaimed:

"That wedding must not be postponed a day, no, nor an hour. O, to have Ray safely here, to be able to tell him all! He will take care of me then—for it grows upon me. I know it, I see it, every attack is harder to overcome than the last. If I can only have rest, and be free from this torturing strain upon my mind!"

As she muttered this, she moved slowly toward the window to close it. She paused abruptly, and stood gazing through the win-

dow, growing rigid and stony again. There in the dimness was the clear outline of a form, for all a shadowy cloud around and about it, clear and distinct, and what light there was in the room seemed to gather in one broad ray, and pour itself upon the face—a face which through the mists shone spectral and eerie—and it was the face of the murdered hermit! One thin shadowy hand was raised, pointing towards the ghastly face staring out upon him, in solemn warning.

Miss Anderson's wild shriek rang out through the silent house, startling the heaviest sleeper from his couch. There was instant stir and bustle without. Felice came rushing into the room, and nearly stumbled over the prostrate senseless form of her mistress. Miss Anderson, for the first time in her life, had fainted entirely away.

CHAPTER XI.

MARY CREYTON, left alone in the farmhouse with Ben White, went about mechanically, fastening the doors, and closing the windows, and putting the room to rights, ready for morning. The girl who helped her with the work, a poor orphan from the almshouse, had long ago retired, and had slept soundly through all the noise accompanying the arrest of the young master.

Ben White sat down ruefully on the first chair at hand in the kitchen, and silently watched Mary Creyton's movements. He saw her pause now and then, with that far-off melancholy look in her eye, and lean her head wearily on her hand. And there rose a choking sensation to Ben's throat as he saw it, and the hand that had been thrust into his trouser's pocket, greedily clutching the broad silver dollars, newly stored there, slowly sneaked away from it, and his eyes dropped to the floor, and he began to feel somehow as if Ben White was, after all, neither particularly sharp nor shrewd, but a poor, contemptible, ungrateful fellow.

It came back to him how generously and kindly these two, mother and son, had dealt with him; how considerate of his feelings—how careful of his comforts. He knew the difference, for he had come there lank and lean, half-starved, from a dreary home at a parsimonious tradesman's in another town. He knew that he had grown plump, and ruddy, and strong, and healthy on the generous fare of Creyton farm. He

suddenly appreciated the kindness of Charlie's patient endeavor to make a good workman of him. He remembered, with a keen pang, how his young master had always favored him in lifting boards and lumber, cautioning him against injuring the growing muscles of boyhood. All these thoughts, like so many solemn accusers, rose up before Ben, as he sat there with hanging head and rapidly sinking heart. The words Mr. Bradley had spoken in the chamber filled him with terrible horror and dismay.

"Evidence enough to hang a man!" Had he, Ben White, helped to hang that good kind master of his?—for Ben had not lived in Charlie Creyton's immediate presence a twelvemonth without getting a profound assurance that whatever the young man said could be relied upon. Charlie Creyton told his mother he was innocent, and having said it thus solemnly, Ben, at least, could not question the truth of it. And yet the coroner affirmed that he would be hung.

Ben began to shiver and shake. He had attended a Methodist camp-meeting near the outskirts of the town that same summer, and all the frightful exhortations concerning the retribution for sin came back to his memory, just as he had heard them shouted there. He could see the skinny finger of that gray-headed old man, who had worked himself into such a wild fever of frenzy, pointing into his face, and could hear the thin but shrill voice shouting:

"Woe, woe unto the sinner! Woe forever and ever!"

Growing paler and paler, quaking with a superstitious terror that every moment gained stronger hold, Ben cowered there by the chimney, longing to shriek out his agony, but not daring to give vent even to a sob.

Mary Creyton had secured everything, and came back to the mantel-shelf to put down her lamp. Charlie's workman's blouse hung there over a chair, with the rent in the sleeve which she had promised to mend, ready for morning. It is always the simplest incident which upsets sternly controlled calmness.

The sight of the blouse, with the remembrance of the trying disgraceful imputations which the morning would send far and wide over the village, a picture of the closed shop, the master locked from the free air by the sheriff's bolts, burst upon her,

and she sank down into a chair, the tide of emotion surging forth in hot torrents of tears and hysterical convulsive sobs.

Ben White stared at her a moment in vague terror, and then slipped out of his chair and fell down cowering at her feet.

"O Miss Creyton, Miss Creyton! kill me, kill me! It's I that have gone and done it all. But I never knowed it would be so bad! O, I never thought they'd go and take him away!"

Mary Creyton roused herself from her own great trouble to look pityingly into the yellow ghastly face of the boy.

"What ails you, Ben? Don't look so frightened!"

But Ben was rolling on the floor in a perfect paroxysm of terror.

"Is it your tooth, Ben? I will put a drop of laudanum in it if it is so bad as that."

"No, no!" roared Ben; "it isn't the tooth—but you'd better give me the laudanum, the whole bottle. O Lord, O Lord, what a miserable critter I be!"

"Why, Ben, you are half crazy! Get up and tell me what's the matter."

Ben came up on his feet in his awkward ungainly fashion, and showed her the round protruding eyes, the pupils dilated with terror, the white cheeks, the blue lips, and the coarse hair standing stiffly from his forehead like bristles.

"O Lord! I'm a lost sinner! The devil has got me sure. O Miss Creyton, what will I do—what will I do?"

She looked at him in vague alarm and utter astonishment, and put her soft hand hastily to his forehead and tried his pulse.

"I think you have lost your senses, Ben. Why don't you tell me where the pain is?"

"Everywhere, all over me. O, the devil has got me!"

"Let me see the tooth!" demanded she, half-angrily.

"'Taint the tooth! 'taint the tooth!" shrieked Ben, dancing up and down like a lunatic. "O Miss Creyton, I lied to you, my tooth didn't ache. I made b'lieve, and got out, so as to run over and tell the coroner I seed the pistol in Mr. Charlie's closet. O Lord! O Lord!"

"It was you who betrayed him, then?" spoke Mary Creyton, sharply, comprehending the case at once; and then she added, in a tone rather of pitying commiseration than upbraiding or reproach, "O Ben White, Ben White!"

Ben dropped on the floor again, grovelling there like some helpless animal.

"O Miss Creyton, I aint fit to die, and I don't want to live, neither! I never stopped to think what it was going to be; no, I never did, or I'd have turned him out of the shop when he come and asked me to find Mr. Charlie's pistol."

"Who asked you, Ben?"

"Mr. Bradley. He never said a word about it was for the murder. And I know Mr. Charlie don't know the first thing about that hermit; but O dear, he'll be hung, and I'll have gone and done it."

"Hush, Ben! Charlie will not be hung—my brave innocent boy will not be hung!" said Mary Creyton, sternly. "You have done wrong, because you have turned against the best friends you have in town. But you did it without considering what it meant. I forgive you freely, and so will Charlie. Get up now and sit down, and tell me more plainly just what you have said and done."

Ben looked up in her face, as he might have looked had a ministering angel, with snowy plumage still a-shine with the glories of the heavenly world, sailed downward to give a drop of reviving moisture to the parched lips of a desert-bound despairing wretch.

"You forgive me—you do forgive me, Miss Creyton? O, the Lord will bless you! And will the devil leave go of me? Them Methodists told o' his holding on and holding on. O Miss Creyton, will I get away from him?"

Mary Creyton did not smile. Ben's distress and horror were too genuine not to stir her sympathy.

"If you repent, Ben, of whatever wrong motive you might have had for such—"

"Repent! I guess I do. Wouldn't I give twice as much as I got to take it back?" interrupted Ben.

And with this, Ben began to fumble in his pockets, and presently out rolled the dollars, ringing musically upon the hearth, for Ben only touched them with the tips of his fingers, and seemed afraid of being scorched by them.

"Sweep 'em out, Miss Creyton. Sweep 'em out. It's Judas money, and I know it."

Mary Creyton's sorrowful lips curved now into a genuine smile. The boy's terrified glance eyeing askance the bright silver coin,

as if each one had talons to seize upon him, was intensely ludicrous.

"But, Ben," said she, "it wont do for you to attend another camp-meeting, if you allow it to take such hold of the imagination. I will keep the money to buy you a warm coat for the coming of winter."

"No, no! I wont wear anything bought with it. It is Judas money, and I want it out of my sight!" vehemently asserted Ben.

"Poor child!" said Mary Creyton, in her angelic compassion stooping over him; "do you indeed feel your sin so heinous? Sit down, then, Ben, and I will read to you my comforting chapter. I will show you the foundation of strength to which I have gone in my sore need, and never come away empty and unsatisfied!"

As she spoke she went over to her work-stand, took from the drawer a small well-worn Bible, came back to Ben's side, and sitting down there, opened the book.

There was a solemn half-frightened expression on the lad's face, but as the sweet clear tones began a gleam of hope and tranquillity crept over it.

"Let not your heart be troubled—"

A tender mist crept into the reader's eyes. How full her own heart had been brimming! If she gave vague comfort to Ben, what unutterable relief she found for herself!

"Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, believing, that shall ye receive. If ye shall ask anything in my name, I will do it."

The book drooped away from her hands. The slender fingers were clasped together, the meek eyes, soul-filled with divine peace, and joyful hope, and holy faith, were lifted upward, and wistful lips moved voicelessly.

Ben never stirred nor took his eyes from her face. It was to that untutored mind like watching a beatific vision. Many minutes passed, and profound peace and silence filled the little kitchen. Were there no rustling wings sweeping over them? Was the great Master looking down, bending tenderly over this tried soul, yearning upward toward his infinite compassion, coming to answer the call, to fulfil the promise? It was so much to ask. Human will and energies were so powerless and weak, but there it was, clear, plain, emphatic. O, how many wrestling, tempest-tossed, yearning hearts have reached thither, and clung with frantic imploring faith—and who has found it false or treacherous?

"If ye ask anything in my name, I will do it!"

Mary Creyton, coming presently with a low tremulous sigh of relief from her ecstatic trance, repeated the words with a glad joyful intonation.

Ben looked into her shining face with wistful eyes.

"Did you pray for me, too, Miss Creyton?" asked he, almost in a whisper.

"My poor boy! I prayed for us all. But, Ben, you must learn to pray for yourself. I will tell you what we will do with the money. You shall go down to-morrow morning to the bookstore, and buy you a pocket Bible, and I will write your name, and this night's date, and my text in it. And who knows what a blessed guide it shall be to you?—for you will never forget what has happened to-day, Ben. That will take but a portion of the money. The rest you may carry to poor Widow Brown. You know Johnny has broken his leg, and cannot help her at all, and she is very poor. So you will do a great deal of good with the money, Ben. And now we ought to go to bed, both of us, and get a night's rest, for you must tend to the shop alone, and I must go down to the village early and see what I can do for Charlie."

Ben rose to his feet, meekly and submissively, took the candle she lighted and went quickly up stairs, after he had relieved his mind by one of his characteristic speeches.

"Miss Creyton, I don't care nothing what the lying folks says about you; I know one thing to-night for certain, you're just a born angel, and no devil can get into the house where you are any more'n he could take a cross a laying on a Bible."

"Then you are safe, Ben, so you may sleep quietly," answered she, with a playful smile, but her eyes at the same time brimmed up with tears.

She was just turning to mount the stairs to her own chamber, when there came a gentle tap on the window. She was not in a mood for being startled, and went at once to the window, the light of her lamp falling full as she did so upon the face of the taxidermist.

"May I speak with you a moment?" asked he, in a cautious voice.

She opened the window at once.

He looked anxiously into her face, as if astonished at its calmness, and said, eagerly:

"I have been misinformed. They told

me your son had been arrested for murder."

"He has," replied Mary, calmly; "but he will come out safely, for he is innocent." The man looked anxious and disturbed.

"Has he told you anything about the circumstances, why appearances are so much against him?"

"He has not. There was no time, and I did not urge it. Charlie and I have implicit trust in each other; thank Heaven that it is so."

"I suppose it will be impossible for me to see him," continued the taxidermist, gravely; "but you may rest assured that I shall be on the watch to assist him. I must leave town at once, on very important business, but I shall return as soon as possible. You will see him, of course. Will you say to him, in just my words, 'that the person who was a witness with him on that fatal night will be on hand at the proper moment?'"

Mary repeated the words slowly after him.

"I am not to say the taxidermist, then?"

"No; it is not in that character that he knew me. I don't want the lad down-hearted. For he might get alarmed, inasmuch as there is really a terrible array of circumstantial evidence against him. Tell him a man came to your window at night and bade you give him the message. And you yourself, dear madam, you will not lose courage, though your boy's safety may seem entirely beyond the power of man?"

"I shall not," answered Mary Creyton, with sweet serenity. "There is a higher power than man's."

The taxidermist muttered some passionate ejaculation whose meaning was lost to her.

"There is no more for you to say?" asked she, gently.

"No more, I suppose, except that I am on the track of my vow for vengeance."

"Leave vengeance to the Lord. But work out the ends of justice. Let George Livingstone's name be cleared from all reproach before I give it to his son! And now let me say good-night. For I am alone, without even my son's protection, and the hour is late."

"Incomparable woman! Thou hast indeed come forth through the furnace purified into refined gold!" murmured the taxidermist, as he walked slowly away, but not toward the cabin.

Mary Creyton closed the window, secured the spring, and went quietly and peacefully to her couch, wondering herself at the strange sweet sense of security and safety which buoyed her up.

She was nearly asleep when there came a pleading voice outside the door.

"Miss Creyton, if you please, might I bring a pillow and comforter right here in the entry by your door? I shan't never get to sleep anywhere else."

"Why yes, Ben. But I would take the mattress, too, or you will get cold."

She heard him bringing them along and setting himself as close as possible to her threshold. Half-amused, and thoroughly touched to pity and sympathy, she said, in a tone of quiet authority:

"Now go to sleep, Ben. Good-night."

"Good-night, ma'am. Heaven bless you!"

And ere long Ben's even breathing told that his perturbed spirit had sunk into quiet rest.

CHAPTER XII.

"ANOTHER note from Miss Anderson," whispered Mrs. Atherton to Amy, as she came into the breakfast-room, where her father was busy reading a letter.

The latter glanced apprehensively toward the head of the house, but his face wore a pleased complacent smile. In a few moments he came forward, and handed the note to his daughter.

"Amy," said he, "you will promise to obey her request implicitly, unless you wish me to remain at home and see it enforced."

Amy opened the note, and read the few lines written in a graceful hand on the satin-smooth perfumed paper.

"DEAR MR. A.—This is to give notice to the dear little rebel that Felice will come over to-day with the carriage, and take the requisite measurements for the various articles of the trousseau. I promised myself the pleasure, but owing to a slight indisposition, the result of rather extravagant exertions of late, I am kept in my chamber. It is my particular desire that Felice discovers no unwillingness or opposition. She is a Frenchwoman, and has her national traits of curious speculation and garrulity, and might, sometime hereafter, start troublesome rumors. My best love to the darling girl, who is at present her own worst

enemy. Don't be harsh with her, I beg and command. There is no fear but she will presently see with clearer eyes. Regards to Mrs. A. Yours ever sincerely,
"SERENA ANDERSON."

Amy held the paper a few moments in silence, and then looked up deprecatingly into her father's resolute face.

"I will not be rude, father, but if I submit in silence before the Frenchwoman, you must understand that I do it only under protest to yourself and Miss Anderson, of the utter uselessness and folly of the whole arrangement."

"Protest as much as you like, it will be one result. I am amazed myself at that generous woman's forbearance. I wonder she does not throw you off with contempt. Hear her pleading for me not to be harsh with you! It makes me long to tear you to pieces for your perversity. What are you snivelling at, Maria? I wonder if there ever was another man so tried by two such ridiculous creatures?"

Mr. Graham Atherton rose from his chair and walked to the breakfast-table.

"Not ready yet? Are you aware that I must be in the bank at a certain hour?"

"Everything is ready but the Indian muffins. You said you could not eat the rye or flour biscuit, and wanted me to make Indian muffins."

"Well, and must you be long enough about it to grind the meal and get it from the mill? You might have known I wanted them at first."

"But yesterday morning you would not touch them, and made me toast bread for you," ventured poor Mrs. Atherton.

"Yesterday isn't to-day, is it?" snappishly inquired the lord and master.

Mrs. Atherton darted back to the kitchen and was hurrying up the muffins.

"I asked him before I came down what he would have," murmured she, as she turned away her flushed face from the fire, "and he said 'anything.'"

Presently the corner ones showed brown and crisp. She took them out and examined them anxiously, and then hurried them on to the table, Nancy following with the rest of the viands.

Mr. Atherton cut the slices of steak, looked at them a moment, and threw down the knife.

"All dried up! about as fit to eat as a

chip," he muttered, in the most disgusted fashion.

"But there's one slice rarer. I cooked another, because the rest stood so long I was afraid it wouldn't be right," said Mrs. Atherton, taking her fork to point out the juicy slice, done to a charm.

Mr. Atherton broke open a muffin, disdaining to hear her explanation.

"Doughy, of course?"

"But the other two are quite brown; try them, Graham."

"Bitter and burnt. It's always one thing or the other here. Am I to go without my coffee? Though I suppose I may as well, for all the good I shall get from it."

The meek wife turned nervously to the coffee-urn, in such trepidation that she burnt her hand with scalding liquid.

"Some people always make a mess of everything they touch!" observed her husband, with a sneer.

And then he proceeded to help himself liberally to the steak he had condemned, consuming enough to decide the question of its proper preparation, judging by the standard of the old proverb, that the proof of the pudding is in the eating. The muffins, too, one after another disappeared from the plate, and when he rose from his chair Mr. Graham Atherton had certainly taken a very respectable breakfast.

Mrs. Atherton left her breakfast still untasted, to bring a clean handkerchief, hunt up his gloves and find his cane. When she at last came back to the table her lord and master had gone down the walk, hailing one after another of the neighbors, with a genial benevolent smile, as he proceeded along the street, and obtaining from one and another the encomium:

"Such a pleasant agreeable man as Mr. Atherton is! It does one good to meet him!"

"I sent your plate out to be kept warm," said Amy, smiling mournfully, as her mother came back. "Now he is gone we will try and have a little peace. Nancy will bring the warm muffins. They are neither dough nor bitterness, but extremely delicious!"

"And you will see the Frenchwoman?" asked Mrs. Atherton, with a wistful glance into Amy's face.

Amy waited until Nancy had gone back to the kitchen and to her own breakfast, ere she replied:

"I suppose so, dear mother. If they persist in making for themselves this useless expense, it is nothing to me. I shall have genuine battles enough, without wasting my strength in skirmishes."

"My poor child!" was Mrs. Atherton's hopeless reply.

"My poor mother!" echoed Amy's heart, but she did not utter the thought.

They had scarcely finished breakfast, and were removing the dishes, when they heard a quick step crunching the gravel of the front walk.

"My father is coming back," said Amy.

"He has forgotten his pen, or pencil, or penknife, or something," observed Mrs. Atherton, in a tone of solicitude.

He came into the room with elastic steps and an eager triumphant face.

"There is stirring news abroad this morning," said he, looking from one expectant face to the other. "Great news indeed. All the village is astir."

He waited a moment impatiently, but neither wife nor daughter made the desired inquiry, which in some degree increased the acrimony of his tone as he proceeded:

"You will both be greatly interested, and Miss Amy will doubtless regret exceedingly that her romantic attachment to the young gentleman has not been allowed to culminate in so desirable a marriage. The honorable Charles Creyton has been arrested for the murder of that poor hermit, and Coroner Bradley assures me that the proofs against him are indisputable and overwhelming!"

He made the announcement in as jubilant a tone as he would have used to proclaim a victory for the nation. Mrs. Atherton, who was standing, dropped down heavily into the chair behind her.

Amy, who was already seated, sprang to her feet, clasped her hands, and looked into the cold hard face with an expression of piteous entreaty.

"It is true; there is no chance for doubt. The arrest was made last night. You will see that you have made a most fortunate escape, young woman, from your headstrong determination to ruin yourself."

Amy's marble white lips moved stiffly, but she could not articulate a word.

The poor mother, whose heart was bleeding for her darling, found courage, for her sake, to say, "It cannot be true. There must be some mistake."

"I tell you there is no mistake. Coroner Bradley himself told me of it. The pistol is found, and the hermit's gold, hid away in the villain's chamber. I always told you he was a scoundrel. You won't need my opinion to prove it to you now. I hope now, Amy, your eyes are clear, and you will come back to be my pride and joy once more."

He spoke this last in a kind, almost tender tone. There was a look on that white set face of such deadly agony that even his hard heart was touched.

"Take care of her," said he, turning to his wife. "I must hurry back to the bank." And he went off again, as swiftly as he had come.

Mrs. Atherton went up to Amy and threw her arms around her neck.

"Amy, Amy, my darling. Don't look so crushed, so stony—you frighten me."

But Amy never moved her fixed glassy eye, nor answered a word.

"Amy, Amy, what ails you? It may not be so bad, how can it be? We'll go out and find out the truth. Come, let's go."

She took her daughter's hand as she spoke and kissed it. It was like ice, and the purple stood beneath the nails. Not daring to show her great alarm, Mrs. Atherton stood a minute chafing it between hers.

"Come, Amy," said she, "let us go into the street, over to Mr. Bradley's, if you like."

No movement, no response, still that rigid form, that fixed glassy eye.

With tears and tender strategy Mrs. Atherton persisted, stroking the hands, kissing every now and then the chilly lips.

"Poor Charlie! poor Charlie! Let us go to comfort him, Amy. He will need your consoling words in this bitter trial."

She saw that the name stirred and roused the paralyzed brain, and repeated it again and again, watching the fluttering breath and heaving chest with intense relief. A strong swift shudder and Amy turned upon her.

"Come, come, why do we delay here? I must go. I can save him, or die with him. If he is guilty, so am I. For I was with him all that evening, and if he had gold, so had I. You can testify to it; I gave it all to you."

"Great Heaven!" ejaculated Mrs. Atherton, trembling from head to foot, "the child has gone crazy."

"No, no, not yet!" answered Amy, pressing both hands to her forehead. "and I must not, till I have saved Charlie!"

She was hurrying to the door without hat or shawl, but Mrs. Atherton caught them up, put them on, and went down the walk, tying her own bonnet strings and folding her shawl.

At the magistrate's office a solemn group had already gathered, when into the grave absorbed group walked a slender figure, and the magistrate was confronted by a youthful face rigid with horror, and marbly white.

Charlie Creyton, from his seat between two officers, gave a low cry, and instinctively held out his arms.

"I have come," said Amy Atherton, in a sweet thrilling voice, "to give my testimony. To save Charlie Creyton."

"Amy, Amy!" cried out Charlie, warningly.

She gave him a single glance of unutterable love, and turned again to the magistrate.

"I wish to be sworn, and give my testimony."

The magistrate held out the Bible, but

had not fairly risen from his seat to administer the oath, when suddenly the girl put her hand to her head, wavered a moment, and fell heavily to the floor.

Charlie Creyton had her in his arms before another person had sense enough to move.

"Amy, Amy!" besought he, in piteous tones.

But the white lids lay stirless on the marble cheek, no breath fluttered through the parted lips.

Mrs. Atherton from the outside, heard his voice, and hurried in. It was a scene of confusion and pitiful distress. When at length she revived, her mind was wandering. The doctor, who had been hurried in, shook his head, and ordered her taken home carefully. A brain fever was the lightest evil he could prophesy.

Charlie Creyton saw the unconscious girl borne away, and with the first growth of anguished despair, buried his face in his hands. Scarcely was Amy removed, ere he was taken away to the county jail, without obtaining even a glimpse of his mother.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

MISS ANDERSON'S RIGHT HAND.

BY AMETHYST WAYNE.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE good physician of Cranston had his hands full that next morning after Charlie Creyton's arrest. First in hot haste he was hurried in to Amy Atherton, lying senseless in the crowded office of the lawyer. And on his return from seeing the poor girl safely into her own bed, with a careful nurse standing over her, he found Ben White, in a perfect fever of impatience and excitement, waiting at his office for him to accompany him back to Creyton farm, where the mistress was waiting with a sprained or broken ankle.

He rode over to the farm, found that Mrs. Creyton, roused from her slumber by a sharp scream below, had sprung out of bed, rushed to the door, and fallen heavily over Ben White, lying there on the entry floor.

"What a snarl of foolishness!" grumbled he, as he examined the swollen ankle. "What was that silly girl screaming for—at a wasp or a toad?"

"She had just learned from a passing neighbor that my son was arrested for murder," answered Mary Creyton, calmly, although the drops of perspiration stood on her forehead, from the agony of the pain. "She is a nervous excitable girl, and is very fond of us, and is not so very much to blame."

"And that lubberly Ben, why was he lying there on the floor, like a stick of wood? Stupid block!"

"Poor Ben!" said Mary Creyton, in a tone of sincere sympathy. "He was nervous and frightened after Charlie was taken away, and could not sleep anywhere else. Why don't you blame me, doctor, the really guilty one, and ask why I didn't know better than to rush out of the room without looking to see what was before me?"

"I reckon you have been already sufficiently punished," answered the doctor, with a grim smile. "If not, you are likely to be. No, the bones are not broken; but there is a sprain and bruise enough to keep you on your couch for a week or two."

She drew a long quivering sigh.

"I wanted to go to my son at once. This is very unfortunate."

The doctor was vigorously at work over his spectacles.

"You think it would be impossible for me to be carried carefully in an easy carriage, just for one interview?"

"Positively suicidal, madam. You will make a very serious thing of what is likely to be coaxed into behaving respectably."

"Then I must stay at home. You think if I am perfectly quiet for ten days, I can go then?"

What imploring accent to the tremulous voice! The doctor's eyes were blinking again.

"We'll try it, we'll try it then, madam, if I have to come myself, and see to it."

"Thank you, doctor! thank you! Perhaps you have heard from Charlie this morning?"

"Yes, I was called in," answered the doctor, reluctantly.

She took alarm at once.

"O doctor, he was not ill? Charlie was not ill?"

"No, no, my dear soul. It was Miss Amy Atherton, who fainted there in the office. Your son was looking as brave, and gallant, and noble as if—as if—I beg your pardon, Madam Creyton—as if there were not such black proofs against him."

"Dear Charlie!" said the mother, in a low wistful voice. "I think this experience must be just the one thing needed to perfect his character, or it would not have been brought about. You believe he is innocent, doctor?"

"I should like to, madam," answered the doctor, bluntly; "but according to the evidence, I don't see how it can be."

"You will see; every one will see!" said the mother, in a voice of solemn tenderness.

"You are acquainted with all the facts, I presume," said the doctor.

"No, with scarcely any; but I am acquainted with my son's character."

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There was a quiet dignity in her manner which was new to her. The worthy physician looked at her sharply.

"I wonder why Amy Atherton was there?" continued Mary Creyton, in a musing voice.

"So does everybody!" observed the doctor, dryly. "In fact, the busybodies have their hands full, to-day. The poor child loves your son, there is no doubt of that. I shall not soon forget the woeful anguish in her voice when her poor delirious eyes turned to mine, a little while back, as she kept groaning, 'O Charlie! O Charlie!' They do say very hard things of your son, aside from this accusation of murder. They insist that he used every possible art to win that innocent girl's love, for the sake of the fortune to come to her, if Miss Anderson remains unmarried. They half surmise that he even enticed her into helping him about this bloody business. They do say hard things, and you would hear it in a sharper way than this, if you went abroad any."

"Well," answered Mary Creyton, her eye flashing with a grand indignant fire, "they have also said hard things of me."

The doctor hemmed.

"Doctor Brown," said Mary, the crimson slowly gathering on her pale cheek, "I know what that cough signifies. You might have said, just as well, 'Well, madam, what can you expect?' But I know you, sir; you have a kind heart, and you are generous in your judgments, even. Can I trust you to keep silence until the trial brings out what might have come before?"

He looked at her in vague uneasiness, but answered, promptly:

"I am not usually a chatterbox, Madam Creyton, and I can mind my own business, I hope."

"Will you be kind enough to pass me that Bible?"

He handed from the stand the little book, carefully covered in bronzed kid, faded long ago by constant usage. Mary Creyton's slender fingers lingered over it a moment, with loving tenderness, then she untied the ribbon which fastened the bronze cover, and slipped out a paper and handed it to the doctor.

It was a square paper, with an engraved edge of flowers, cupids, etc., such as some clergymen procure for their marriage certificates intended for framing. The doctor

gravely unfolded it, read it through, examined the bold, legible signature, and turned to his patient.

"Madam," said he, "you are a persecuted saint."

"You see there is no doubt. That clergyman is still living. He is a famous preacher, now; but he will not forget the ceremony, because, as you see in the corner, it was the first he had ever performed."

"And that has been in your possession all this time, and you have borne the scorn and slights of all the town? Madam, you are a miracle of womanhood!"

"Doctor," said she, with one of her angelic smiles, "you see, now, that the town's judgment is sometimes at fault. As it has been with the mother, may it not be also with the son? At least, you will take back your insinuation that it was a mercenary motive which induced Charlie to seek Amy Atherton's love?"

The doctor gave another start.

"Why, sure enough! I had forgotten what else it meant. Good heavens, madam! why do you not rush forth and proclaim it?"

"In good time, doctor, if my ankle will be well. Besides," she added, with a strong shudder, "there really was a murder, and we must find the truly guilty one."

"That ankle shall be faithfully tended!" exclaimed the worthy physician, in a fever of penitence and sympathy.

"I have two devoted attendants. Both Ben and Jane are in an agony of self-reproach that it should have happened. They will give me faithful care."

"And you are not to fret yourself into a low fever?"

The patient lifted a pair of reproachful eyes.

"Have I borne so much, and shall I falter here? The care which has taken me safely thus far will give me strength for all the rest. I must write to Charlie, and then I shall rest quietly."

The doctor then drove slowly away, murmuring, as Ben had done, the night before:

"She is an angel! That woman is little short of an angel, and must sanctify every one who comes near her. How, then, can this son of hers be guilty of such a crime as murder?"

Before he reached home he met a servant from Lakeville. Miss Anderson was indisposed, and wished to consult him.

"Is all Cranstown to be at my heels to-

day?" queried the doctor, as he turned his horse's head towards Lakeville.

Miss Anderson from her lace-hung couch, smiled brilliantly as he entered, although the physician's keen eye read beneath it the little flurry of anxiety and nervousness.

"Good-morning, Doctor Brown. I trust you didn't come expecting to find any very desperate case."

"We shall see. What are the symptoms?" replied the doctor, reaching out his hand for her wrist.

She gave him the left hand, languidly.

"Nothing particularly alarming, only I am conscious of a growing morbid nervousness. My imagination runs away with me. I have odd fancies, from which I can hardly get away; and last night they culminated in an odd attack. I actually, truly, doctor—" and she shivered, and her eyes deepened to inkier blackness—"I really thought I saw a spectre, the living image of a dead man, right before my eyes. I screamed and fainted, and, since it has come to that, I concluded it was time that my unruly nerves were looked after."

The doctor listened quietly, and without betraying it, watched closely every look and gesture.

"The pulse is somewhat excited; nothing remarkable, however. And how about the head? much pain?"

"I believe my headaches come rather oftener than they used. Doctor, do you think a person can be conscious of two identities at one time? That is—I can't explain as lucidly as I should like—could I myself be shivering, dreading, feeling the gradual control of something else taking possession of me—know exactly when it is coming on, and just when it is ready to retire?"

She endeavored to speak calmly; but despite her efforts, the color rose to her cheek, her breath quickened, and she gave one of her peculiar, stealthy, sidelong glances towards the right hand which lay passive on the outside of the silken coverlet.

The doctor bent down his head, to hide a sudden gleam which shot across his eyes.

"People tell about such things, sometimes. I haven't much faith in them. Disordered nerves are mischievous enough for most anything. I think your whole system wants toning up," he answered, carelessly. "Now I will try your pulse again. No, your right hand, if you please."

"Take it," said she. "I don't feel as if I could lift it."

She tried to smile, but her lips whitened. The keen-eyed physician lost nothing.

"Hem," said he, "rather more fever than I supposed. A few prescriptions, faithfully followed, will set you right, I fancy. There's nothing to fret your mind and put you back, is there? Because that will neutralize my efforts."

She laughed, as she answered, in a light sportive tone:

"What should there be, doctor, since I have no drinking husband, nor disobedient daughter, nor anything of that sort?"

"What, indeed!" And the doctor took out his pencil and his paper slips to write his prescription.

"Deal candidly with me, Doctor Brown," said she, suddenly, motioning for the nurse to leave the room. "Supposing I do not improve, what will this lead to?"

"Well, to be sure, how am I to know? It may take half-a-dozen ways of being revenged for your carelessness. But it is very important, Miss Anderson, that you be free from excitement, as calm and quiet as possible. I'm afraid you've been rather dissipated, of late."

"I believe I have been pretty gay. This season, you know, while I am in the country, I enjoy company."

"It would be wise to give them polite invitations to remain at home. I am very particular about this, Miss Anderson, that you be free from every excitement. I would recommend, also, a generous but simple diet, and avoidance of wine, which is probably, however, an unnecessary caution."

He asked himself half-a-dozen times, when home in his office, revolving the conversation, did Miss Anderson blush, or was it only the flush from the fit of coughing which seized her as he was making this remark?

"Have you any other suggestions? pray be particular to remember everything," she said, in a moment more. "Supposing—supposing something like what happened last night should be coming on, and I should know it. Can't you give me something to take, to drive it off, to bring me to myself?"

The doctor put another question.

"Would it always be the same appearance? Is it always one form of evil that you dread?" he asked, eagerly.

She looked at him with a keen searching glance, from under the drooping lashes, and answered back a lie.

"Why no. Though my own distress and annoying sensations are always the same."

"You can take one of the powders immediately; and though I want you free from company, I would like you to have always a quiet companion. Such moods come, do they not, in solitude?"

"Most frequently," answered she, with a little shiver. "Doctor Brown, you must look after me. If you like, we will have down a city physician, but I trust myself with you. Save me from drifting—you know whither, and believe me, your reward shall not be stinted."

"I will do everything in my power. Rest and a quiet mind, however, are the most potent aids. And now allow me to wish you good-day."

He shook her hand, not unmindful that he again received the left hand, and, repeating his charges to the housekeeper, with a few questions concerning Miss Anderson's parents, drove off, once more, in the direction of his office.

"It's odd, extremely odd!" muttered the worthy doctor. "Look at these two women, now. One of them has borne everything—disgrace, shame, unutterable anguish—scarcely, for years, above poverty, and here, under the last terrible blow of her only son's arrest for murder, she stands up calm, steadfast, serene, bearing that twitching pain in her ankle like a heroine, and seemingly able to support, with that wonderful strength of hers, half-a-dozen faltering hearts. And there's Miss Anderson, rich, pampered, flattered, every trouble, one would think, smoothed out of her pathway—with a fine healthy constitution, every opportunity for enjoyment of life, and here she is actually galloping towards insanity for the very lack of any stamina to resist a little nervousness. These women are queer creatures!"

CHAPTER XIV.

It must be admitted that when at last Mary Creyton was able to bear the ride to the county jail, she found her son looking thin, and pale, and careworn. For all his professed confidence and his brave heart, Charlie's trouble had worn upon him. The day of trial at court was rapidly approaching, and now that he was called upon to make out a direct line of defence for his lawyer, he discovered how momentous might

be the result, if the promised witness should not appear, and could not shake off a nervous dread, and foreboding of evil. The lawyer was angry and indignant at his client's reticence, and almost inclined to believe his guilt. He was with the prisoner when Mary Creyton gained admittance, and said, earnestly, as he shook her hand:

"I hope you will prevail upon this young man to allow me to ask more time, so that we may get the testimony of Miss Atherton. He very peremptorily refuses to summon her as one of his witnesses, although he admits she can clear him," said the lawyer.

Mary's two hands were locked in Charlie's firm clasp, and she scarcely heard a word of the speech.

"O mother, dear mother! I have missed you so much!" says Charlie, with a strong effort keeping down the sob in his throat. "Even your letters could not atone for your smile and encouraging looks. Are you quite recovered?"

"Near enough to warrant good Doctor Brown's permission to visit you every other day. I grieved most for the accident because it kept me from you. Charlie, you have not borne it as well as I hoped. You look worn and thin."

"I miss the fresh air, and my stirring active life," answered Charlie. "And I am troubled about Amy. I hear nothing satisfactory. Can you tell me if she is really improving?"

"Doctor Brown brings me regular bulletins. He says he has strong hopes of her ultimate recovery. But I should judge she is still very weak; too weak, in fact, to exert herself at all, in mind or body. He is trying to find out which it is of the parents who has such unfortunate influence over her, so as to forbid that one to visit her. At present, neither is allowed in the sick room, except when she is sleeping."

"Dear generous little Amy!" murmured Charlie, his proud lip quivering. "She has borne enough; she shall not be dragged into court."

"But, my dear sir, what will you do without her evidence? What you have furnished me is not worth a straw, and your own statement goes for nothing with the jury," interrupted the lawyer, testily.

"I know it. But there is one I can call who will be worth a score of common witnesses. Mother, dear, you wrote me he promised to come. I wish I need not be so

painfully anxious about it. His failure to appear will be life or death with me."

Mary Creyton bent down and kissed his hand.

"I think there is no fear, Charlie. If he is alive, he will come."

"And if anything should happen to him," said Charlie, with a shiver, "nothing I could offer would have a feather's weight against the black array of circumstantial evidence."

"Heaven will take care of him, and of you, Charlie. And besides, you will have your mother's testimony."

"For what?" asked the lawyer, eagerly.

"My testimony to my son's character, and a revelation which may throw light upon the mysterious nature of this murder."

"Am I to have it now, madam?"

"Not yet. I will wait for the important witness to appear. It is a trying ordeal to face a court room. I would make sure that it is absolutely necessary."

The legal gentleman shrugged his shoulders. Was ever before such indifference to so threatening a fate? What sort of a plea should he be able to get up, when even the little material in his hands was taken away?

"Whatever you say or do," said Charlie Creyton, "do not allude to the shred of silk found in the doorway."

"But that might throw suspicion on another party—a woman, anybody to divert it from yourself," said the lawyer, testily.

"I tell you it would hurt me more than anything else you could say or do, and it must not be."

"I think you had better conduct your defence yourself," said the lawyer, indignantly.

"It might be as well," returned Charlie, composedly. "If my witness comes, I shall need nothing more, and if he does not come, the most consummate skill in the land won't help me."

"Where is this witness? There is still time enough to hunt him up, and make sure that he will come. Where shall I go for him?"

"Heaven knows, but I do not," answered Charlie.

"Nor you?" interrogated the lawyer of Mary Creyton.

She shook her head gravely, but not despairingly.

"What is his name? I can set a detective at work, or advertise."

"I do not even know his name? Did he tell you, mother?"

"Nothing, whatever, about himself."

"A very secure witness!" ejaculated the lawyer. "You don't know where to find him, or what to call him. Could you tell me how he looks, even?"

"Gray hair, and long snowy whiskers, a rather stooping form, and—" began Charlie.

But Mary Creyton interrupted hastily, in a half-frightened voice:

"O no, Charlie—black hair, very short, and black mustache."

"Well," exclaimed the lawyer, with a short contemptuous laugh, "I think your witness is a myth, altogether, and that, as you say, Heaven only knows anything about him. I am amazed, young man, that you will trifle with so frail a chance for life. I assure you, there is about as much chance of your coming into possession of—of—why, of that splendid Livingstone estate in your town, as of obtaining an acquittal from the most lenient jury, on such evidence as you have given me to offer."

"We won't be down-hearted, for all that, will we, Charlie?" said the mother, crossing to his side, with a proud significant smile. "And we will take his words as a good omen. If Heaven knows, it is enough for us to trust that he will be brought forth at the right hour."

"What are these people?" muttered the lawyer, as he walked away, "simple credulous fanatics, or are they pure heroic souls, such as we read about, and so seldom see?"

Cranstown was not troubled by the lawyer's doubts. A ferment of eager excitement stirred the town from one end to the other, and very few indeed were they who raised a protesting voice against the clamor of horror and indignation. Doctor Brown, it is true, puzzled the people, by now and then turning upon them sharply, in the midst of their angry vituperation against the hapless Charlie, and asking, with a quizzical smile, if they were willing he should make a note of the remark, for future reference. There were others—generous, honest people, who had been made aware of the sterling worth and unostentatious nobleness of soul of these two, who spoke up bravely, and still clung to the hope that all would yet be happily explained. But the majority of the people were ready to applaud the conviction and sentence which would give their young townsman to the gallows. There

were many who had always been indignant at Charlie Creyton's happy ease and free independence, so unbecoming, they said, for one in his position; and those were glad to turn, now, and cite their old disapprobation, as sure proof of great sagacity and discernment.

Mr. Atherton was as much exercised by the floating rumors vaguely connecting his daughter with the transactions of that fatal night, as he was troubled by Amy's illness, and certain unwelcome suspicions of his own. He followed up a story about the shred of black silk, and obtained from Mr. Bradley what Nancy had told him concerning the burning of the apron.

Poor Nancy was frightened out of what little senses she naturally possessed, and with sobs and tears promised to affirm that it was only an old black silk necktie, which her master had thrown into the stove. He carried daily reports to Miss Anderson, who found magical means for silencing the unpleasant talk concerning the future heiress of Lakeville. They were almost equally anxious that the trial should be over, and the suspense ended. Miss Anderson kept herself very carefully secluded, according to the doctor's orders, and declared that she steadily avoided all excitement. Nevertheless, she grew thin and pale, and had the appearance of one who was secretly consuming all her vitality and strength in feverish restlessness.

She saw no company except the doctor, Mr. Atherton, and Ray Dexter. The latter, indeed, spent nearly all his time at Lakeville, enjoying its luxurious ease, and willing to read, and sing, and talk, for the invalid's amusement. And Miss Anderson never seemed so quiet and contented as in his presence. When Ray sauntered away to the village, Miss Anderson rode in her luxurious carriage, and the coachman began presently to wonder why their route always led them past the lonely quiet house at Creyton farm. He couldn't help perceiving, likewise, what keen swift glances his mistress swept towards those humble windows.

Mary Creyton was coming from the village, once, and they met, face to face. The poor traduced mother of a boy in jail, awaiting trial for murder, and the fashionable and stately fine lady, in her luxurious carriage.

Their eyes met. Miss Anderson put a stern, threatening, annihilating fire into

hers, but Mary's were not lowered. Something in that expression added a new alarm to Miss Anderson's already morbid dread of impending evil.

"Rest and quiet, rest and quiet!" muttered she, that night, when Doctor Brown left her. "I shall never obtain it until that trial is over. What new spectre is this in my path? Absurd! The oath he has kept so many years, why should it be broken now? Besides, she does not suspect. She does not dream—pshaw! I am tormenting myself again. Be still, be still, restless mind! you must be calm!" And then the eager hand was reached forth towards the ruby and silver flask, and was drawn shrinking back.

"Ray, Ray, where are you?" Miss Anderson would cry, imploringly.

And Ray would come, wondering, and yet flattered by this growing need of him, taking foolish pride even in the whispered comments of the servants, who could no longer be blind to the infatuation of their mistress. Ray would stroke her hand softly—her left hand, she would never, on any consideration, allow him to touch the right—or would smooth her forehead with one or two light caressing touches, and sit down beside her, and sing or read. And presently the set white look would fade away from her face. She would heave a long and tremulous sigh, give him a grateful, inexpressibly tender smile, and say:

"Ah, now you have exorcised the uncanny spirit. I am well and strong again."

Such scenes occurred frequently. Ray gave the doctor a brief sketch, and received a grave nod.

"She must be humored. There is a crisis of some sort coming. My efforts seem like a straw stemming a tempestuous ocean, about as hopeless, I fear. But I can't see what keeps her in such a fever, for her quiet is all a sham. It is well there is some one with a soothing influence. You are the gentleman chosen by her to marry the heiress. I understand, then, that she looks upon you like one of the family, and see no occasion for the foolish talk of the servants. But it is well to humor her until this strange excitement passes off; after which I would advise your cautious withdrawal."

Ray Dexter had the grace to color a little, and only bowed a silent response.

"I spoke to your adopted father about something the housekeeper hinted; but he

seemed in no ways concerned. He said Miss Anderson was always fond of you, from your boyhood, and that she called you and Amy Atherton her children."

Ray bowed again; but there was a sparkle of anger in his eye, though he assumed a careless tone.

"You are a good fellow, doctor, and mean well, but I assure you that your anxiety is quite superfluous. Miss Anderson and I understand each other perfectly. When I am married to Amy Atherton, I shall be her protector and best friend. It is natural that our friendship should be warm and intimate."

"Then you are Miss Atherton's accepted lover?" queried the doctor, with a keen glance into his face.

Ray's was haughty, now.

"I am to marry Miss Atherton, yes sir."

"Had you seen her very frequently before her illness? Did you understand her sentiments thoroughly?"

"Sir!" And Ray did his best to put on a superb air of insulted dignity.

"I asked if you understood the poor child's mind—her heart, rather?"

"It seems to me, Doctor Brown, you are out of your province. What is it to you how well Amy and I understand each other?"

"A great deal, young man. I am the poor girl's physician, and if I find her mind requires more careful doctoring than her physical frame, shall I neglect any opportunity to receive all the light I can concerning it? One thing is very evident. Amy Atherton's heart is bound up in Charlie Creyton, poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow!" echoed Ray, angrily. "Are you wont to waste your sympathies on murderers?"

"No, nor upon fortune-hunters," returned the doctor, coolly, in no way discomposed by the rage into which the young gentleman had worked himself. "But there are exceptions to all cases. Charlie Creyton must be proved guilty before he will receive my judgment. It is a pretty fair proof of his worth that such a girl as Amy Atherton should love him. Were I you, it would require fifty such fortunes as that of the Livingstones to induce me to come between them."

"When I am in need of prescription or

advice, Doctor Brown, I will come for it," retorted Ray, walking off.

The doctor rode over to Mr. Atherton's at a brisk trot.

"I'll get to the bottom of the matter," said he. "I won't have the girl murdered under my hands. Graham Atherton is such a genial clever fellow, I can't believe he would force his daughter's inclination. And the mother, though one of those still shy women you don't know how to take, seems too tenderly devoted to be willing to sacrifice her happiness. I must e'en put a few home questions, that, when the poor child recovers consciousness, I shall know how to deal with her."

Fortunately for the good doctor's kindly intentions, Mr. Atherton was not at home, and his wife, after receiving his friendly but grave explanation of the danger which threatened, and the extreme delicacy and caution required in dealing with the patient, burst into a flood of relieving tears, and told him all.

"Why," said the indignant doctor, "one would think we had gone back to the days of barbarism and despotism. You shall lose nothing by this confidence, my dear madam. I have an idea. A very crude and bewildered glimmering of a suggestion, but we will see what comes of it. Now let me take a look at the patient. You think she is perfectly conscious of everything going on about her?"

"I certainly do, only she is too weak to exert herself at all."

"Possibly, too, she shrinks from coming again into trouble. If we had only good news from that trial, it would be worth while to rouse her. It would be worth more than all my medicine-chest, and your nursing."

"When does the trial begin?"

"In two days. I expect Cranstown will be depopulated. It's curious how such an excitement will run away with people. Everybody will be at the courthouse in D—, though they be obliged to crawl on their hands and knees to get there. Even Miss Anderson, for aught I know. I wonder, I wonder if I had got anywhere near the skeleton in that closet? Heigh-ho! this is a curious world, and a physician sometimes gets at the queerest part of it!"

[CONCLUDED IN NEXT NUMBER.]

MONTEITH BROTHERS.

BY W. H. MACY.

WHEN I was in the old barque Danube, bound to Cronstadt, we had a young fellow among our crew named Joe Archibald, who had hailed from somewhere up in New York State. Joe was a steady, willing chap enough, but slow in his movements, and sometimes rather dull of comprehension.

One night, in the British Channel, we were aloft, reefing the main-topsail, and I don't know how it happened, but Joe was out on the weather-yardarm, at the earing. He didn't get there very often in reefing, but there he was, in this particular case, and he made very slow work of hauling his earing out. We all got impatient, and raised quite a clamor about it, until at last the second mate, who was in the bunt or slings of the yard directing the work, thought it was time to look up the matter. He passed out across our backs, and seizing the lift, jumped up on the yard, striding the neck of Hans the Swede, who was at the "dogs-ear," helping Archibald. The sec-

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ond mate, who was an old English salt, at once began to bully Joe, and some high words passed between them. The last words I heard were from the officer, to the effect that Joe was a condemned lazy offspring of a female dog, though this was not the precise form in which the speaker put it. The Yankee blood of Joe Archibald rose up at this language, and he, in person, rose up too, and clinched with his tyrannical superior. A fierce struggle ensued, the details of which could not be seen by us in the darkness, but Hans had to "lay in," and crowd the rest of us up towards the mast, to give the combatants room. After a minute of fearful suspense, during which no word was spoken, the two men were seen falling, locked together, down into the dark void below! "Man overboard!" roared old Hans, and other voices took up the chorus as we hurried down on deck, not stopping to secure the slatting canvas. The mate had seen, indistinctly, what was going on,

and saw the men fall into the sea, for the ship was on the weather-roll at the moment, and they both went clear of the side. The life-buoy was cut away from the stern, the hencoop thrown overboard, and an attempt made to lower away a boat. But nothing was ready, and the small boat on the quarter, from neglect, was hardly in a condition to float, even in smooth water. We could not back under short sail, so we put the helm up and wore round, which used up some time, and brought us well to leeward of the spot where the men went down. Finally, it was decided to be useless, considering all the circumstances, to put our boat into the water, and after manœuvring a little in the neighborhood of the place, we gave the men up, and proceeded on our course.

We got the topsail reefed, but it was a sad time with us, and we made bungling work. We were very short-handed after the loss of our two shipmates, and the mate was forced to go aloft himself with the rest. After all was snug for the night the tragedy was talked over, and both ends of the ship compared notes about it. The mate said that there were two splashes in the water some feet apart, though both at the same instant of time. He saw nothing of either of the men afterwards, but the captain, who had rushed out of his berth at the sound of the alarm, and cut away the buoy, thought he saw one of them rise on a sea astern. But he was not sure of this, and it might have been only his imagination. The phlegmatic Hans, who was the nearest witness to the death-struggle of the two men, could tell little more than what the rest of us already knew; and he was so overwhelmed with astonishment when he saw Joe Archibald, without speaking a word, straighten himself up and grapple with the stout Englishman, that he could hardly be said to have his wits about him. So, as in all such cases, the matter was a nine days' wonder, and then ceased to be the topic of conversation. In due time we arrived at our port, where other men were shipped to fill the vacancies, and the sad circumstances were seldom alluded to on the return voyage.

It was more than a year after this that I was in Liverpool, belonging then to the packet ship "*Fidelia*," of New York. We were nearly ready to sail on our return, when among the passengers who came on board to cross the ocean with us to America,

were two ladies, evidently mother and daughter, as the family resemblance was strong between them. While I was busy aloft a neatly-dressed young man came off in another boat, and I observed that he was very attentive to the younger lady, and their farewells seemed to be of a prolonged and tender character. I thought the figure and attitudes of this man had something strangely familiar to me; and as I came down from my work, I had a fair view of his face as he was going over the gangway into his boat. Spite of his spruce longshore togs, it could be no other than my lost shipmate Joe Archibald!

"Joe!" said I, extending my hand. "How are you, old fellow?"

The young man regarded me with a polite stare, but did not meet my hand with his own. It was Joe Archibald, and no one else; but he evidently did not mean to recognize me.

"You have the advantage of me, sir," he said.

"Well, perhaps you have forgotten the voyage in the old Danube, but I don't believe you have, or the way you went overboard, locking yards with that bully of a second mate. Look 'ee here, Joe; you needn't be afraid of the consequences from that affair, and slight an old shipmate who is really glad to meet you, and would like to know by what strange miracle you were saved, and wouldn't bring you into any trouble for—"

"You are evidently mistaken in the person, sir," he interrupted. "You will excuse me, sir, if you please, as I fear I have already overstayed my time. Good-day, sir." And with a last glance of admiration at the young lady passenger, who seemed an amused spectator of this scene, he went down the side into his wherry, and was pulled away towards the pier. An order summoned me away to duty just then, but I determined to make the acquaintance of the ladies on the passage, and find out all I could about their friend. I was quite indignant that Joe should thus cut an old crony, and could not believe it could result from pride or any feeling growing out of bettered circumstances. Such conduct did not seem at all like my shipmate as I had known and remembered him; and I decided that my first theory must be correct; he was afraid of trouble on account of the scrape in which he had sacrificed the officer's

life, and so nearly lost his own. For this reason he had changed his name, and did not care to be known.

We proceeded on our voyage to New York, and it was several days before I got a good opportunity to speak to the ladies; though I found out that they bore the names of Mrs. and Miss Joy, and also that they were Americans returning to their native country, after having resided for some time in Liverpool. They were still in half-mourning, the husband and father having died a few months before.

One fine evening I was at the wheel, and the officer of the deck out of hearing, when Mrs. Joy came on deck and stood near me, looking out upon the ocean. Now was my time to get some light upon the mystery of Joe Archibald.

"Excuse me, madam," said I, putting on the best airs I knew how, "but I would like to make an inquiry of you."

"Indeed," said she, with a little surprise, but pleasantly enough. "What may it be, sir?"

"There was a young man on board the day we left Liverpool," said I, "who appeared to be acquainted with you, or perhaps I should say with the younger lady, your companion."

"My daughter, I presume you mean," she interrupted with a smile.

"Yes—or at least I supposed her to be such. May I ask you the name of the young gentleman? I assure you this is no idle talk on my part, but, for certain reasons, I have a special interest in the question and its answer."

"Why, sir, that is Mr. Monteith, confidential clerk of Butler Brothers. He is—as perhaps you may have guessed from what you observed—quite attentive to Susie, and has been so indeed for some time."

"Monteith, did you say his name was?" I asked.

"Yes sir, Thomas Monteith. Why, did you ever know him? He has the reputation of being a most worthy young man."

"No doubt of that," said I. "Yes, madam, I knew him, and I am sure I know no ill of him, except it be that he cuts an old shipmate; but he may have had good reasons for that, or, at least, what he thought good reasons."

"I cannot believe from what I know of Thomas Monteith that he would act thus without good reasons," returned Mrs. Joy, bridling up.

"Probably not, as Thomas Monteith; but when I was shipmate with him his name was Joe Archibald."

"Mystery!" said the lady. "How long ago was this?"

"Something more than a year now. May I ask, madam, how long you have known him?"

"Well, I must admit that it is rather less than one year, and I have heard him speak of having followed the sea before we knew him. But tell me, if you please, what you know about this gentleman, or about Mr. Archibald—for I cannot believe they are one and the same person."

"He sailed with me in the barque Danube," I answered, cautiously. "But I don't think I care to talk about how we parted company. He left us suddenly in the middle of the voyage, under remarkable circumstances, which I think may be connected with this secrecy and change of name."

"I see you are not to be drawn out on this subject," she said, with a slight tone of vexation. "But I may ask one question, whether the circumstances to which you allude were such as to be any stain upon his character? I am anxious on this point."

"No, madam," said I. "At least I don't think they were."

"And still they were such as might cause a man to change his name and cut his old acquaintances?"

"Yes. That is, he might feel it necessary to do so for his personal safety, though his own conscience might be clear enough."

At this moment the approach of the officer of the watch cut short the conversation, and the lady passed below to her cabin, with her curiosity now thoroughly aroused, and completely on the rack.

The next day, when I was again at the helm, the daughter sought an interview with me; but I was satisfied I could gain nothing from the ladies in the way of information, they having only known Monteith for a few months, as a clerk in a certain store, and being quite in the dark as to his antecedents. I could not do otherwise than be civil and polite to Susie Joy, with her youth, beauty and modesty, but I also tried to be reticent. Her persuasive powers drew little more from me than I had already said to her mother, which Susie of course already knew in detail. She had seen, rather than heard, what passed between me

and her admirer at the gangway the day she came on board, and her interest and curiosity were even greater than those of her mother. I had no word to say against Mr. Monteith, and finally admitted that it was possible I might be mistaken in the matter of identity. I drew from her that her Thomas also called himself an American, that he had spoken incidentally of having been a seaman, and that he was expected to follow them across the water the succeeding summer. She did not say for what purpose he was coming, but there was a significance in her tone and manner which I was shrewd enough to understand.

Thus matters stood when we arrived at New York and landed our passengers. I did not lose track of the Joys, but learned that their home was in the city, though well "up town." I made three successive voyages in the *Fidelia* to Liverpool and back to New York, and still kept the run of the family, living in the same spot. I looked up the place of business of Butler Brothers, in Liverpool, and once through a window saw the young clerk. The more I looked at him the more I was satisfied he was no other than my lost shipmate; but as he did not choose to acknowledge himself as such, why should I intrude myself upon him?

Summer came, and the time when Monteith was to have his vacation arrived. Susie Joy had told me that he would probably take passage over in our ship, and I looked carefully into the face of every new arrival on board, intending if I again met my mysterious ex-shipmate, to try him again as Joe Archibald. But the *Fidelia* was ready for sea, and the last boat had left us for the shore; Mr. Monteith had not come, and how the faithful girl would be disappointed!

It occurred to me, however, that ours was by no means the only packet ship of the summer. The Garrick had sailed a few days before, and it was possible that he might have secured an earlier passage, to surprise his lady-love. The Manhattan was "up" for New York to follow us the next week, and he might have waited for that ship. Our trip was a short one, and I lost no time, as soon as I could be spared from duty, in calling at the home of the Joys.

I found the young lady in a melancholy mood, and she burst into tears at sight of me, as if my appearance had served to call up unpleasant thoughts. She tried to be

reticent as to the cause of her emotion, but I drew from her the confession that Thomas Monteith had proved false and unworthy of her constancy. She had met him on Broadway walking in company with another lady, had looked him full in the face without receiving any answering glance of recognition. She had even demeaned herself so far as to address him by his Christian name, but was rewarded with a careless stare, and then an intimation, rather impatiently thrown out, that there must be some mistake. Mortified, and, as she thought, insulted, the poor girl had returned home to nurse her sorrows, or to combat them with her pride, as best she could. She was sure of the identity of Thomas Monteith—who should know him if she did not? As I could testify that he was not a passenger in our ship, it was plain that he must have come over in the Garrick.

I went to the office of the line to which that ship belonged, and thoroughly examined the passenger list. But no such name as either Monteith or Archibald was to be found. I made particular inquiries of some of the Garrick's crew with whom I was acquainted, but she had brought over no young man, either in cabin or steerage, at all answering the description. The whole matter was more deeply involved than ever in mystery.

Becoming now quite excited on the subject, and having spare time on my hands, I instituted a systematic search for Archibald, or Monteith, whoever he might be. I visited all the boarding-houses for seamen that I had any knowledge of, for if Joe were still following the sea, in some one of these he would probably be found. I was coming out of one where I had examined all the names on the list without being any the wiser, when I saw my man approaching. I rushed into the street to meet him, the landlord crying out after me:

"Is that the man you want? Why, that's Jack Smith!"

"Joe!" said I, with outstretched hand. "How are you, old crony?"

"Ben Warren!" he exclaimed, in a tone of glad surprise. "But hush! don't call me Archibald. I'm Jack Smith here. I've had half a dozen names since that unlucky tumble from the *Danube's* main-topsail-yard, and to tell the truth, I was sailing under a purser's name even then."

"So I suppose," I answered. "If your

name isn't Archibald, it may be *Monteith*."

Joe looked at me in some surprise, and led the way into his own lodging-room, closing the door.

"I don't know how you guessed this, but Monteith is my real name, and I've no cause to be ashamed of it. I followed the example of many other fools, and went to sea under false colors, and now, on account of the tragedy where I so nearly lost my own life, I fight shy of the name of Archibald, and never answer to it."

"I don't think you need to have any fear on that score. I suppose you were picked up by one of those chances that may be called miracles. And was the English second mate saved too? Tell us your story—but hold on, first answer one question—have you a twin brother?"

"Now, I'm all out of breath with your questions. Well, yes, I *was* picked up, and by a miracle, too, in the literal sense of the word, for it was the brig *Miracle*, of Baltimore, that fell in with me, at daylight the next morning, astride of the Danube's life-buoy, and nearly ready to drop off from exhaustion. No, the second mate was not saved, too—at least not to my knowledge. And yes, I have a twin brother—or had one a few years ago. He went to sea before I did, and the last I heard of him was in Liverpool. He had worked into some employment there ashore. Why did you ask?"

"Because I have seen your brother, Thomas Monteith, and he will probably be here in a day or two, in the Manhattan, if indeed he has not already arrived. And the mystery that has haunted me these last six months is all clear to me. But come, I want you to go with me to see a certain young lady up town."

"O," said Joe, or Richard Monteith, as he should now be called, "I don't know how to visit young ladies. It isn't in my line of business."

"That's what *she* thought when she met you the other day on Broadway and called you 'Thomas.' And yet you had a lady in tow at that time."

"Ah! *that's* the lady, is it?" he asked. "Now I remember; but I was taken by surprise, and perhaps was rather abrupt in telling her she was mistaken in the person. Well, I had a young woman in tow at the time—or perhaps I should say she had me in tow. She was an old acquaintance, daughter of one of my former landladies.

But if you and the other lady are both acquainted with my brother Tom, I suppose I must go with you, and we can talk as we go."

Our conference was a highly interesting one, and was cut short by our arrival at Mrs. Joy's door. Being shown in, we found Susie Joy and Thomas Monteith seated side by side on the sofa, but both wearing a slight expression of constraint, as if there were some matter between them not quite satisfactorily explained.

I saluted the young lady, gave a cool nod to the gentleman, and then introduced his double as a friend and former shipmate of mine, Mr. Smith.

But the name only bewildered Thomas for a moment, sufficient to add more effect to the amusing tableau, for the brothers were not long in recognizing each other. But Miss Joy's bewilderment was certainly greater than that of any one else, unless it might be her mother, who had followed us into the room. The two ladies looked from one to the other of the twins, and back again, then at each other, comparing notes, and talking mostly in interjections. I offered to wager Susie that if I took them both out of the room, and made some little alteration in their dress to bring them both alike, she could not identify her own lover. She looked again and again at them both, and declined to take the risk. Indeed, the resemblance between the brothers was so perfect, that how their own parents could have distinguished them seemed a mystery to us all.

They had been orphaned a few years before, and had separated each to seek his own fortune. Leading the wandering lives of seamen, they had lost all trace of each other, until they were thus somewhat strangely brought together.

A happy wedding party was that held at the home of the Joys a few evenings later. Dick Monteith went with the newly-married couple in the *Fidelia* on her next voyage to Liverpool, where he also entered the employ of Butler Brothers. My wanderings took me in a different direction after that voyage, and I have never seen either of them since. But I have heard that those doing business with the present firm of Monteith Brothers have great difficulty in distinguishing the members of it one from the other; and that many ludicrous mistakes arise in consequence, making the career of the twins a complete Comedy of Errors.

MR. BARTON'S EXPERIMENT.

BY MARY HELEN BOODEY.

"O MOTHER!" cried Alice Barton, as she came in from school one afternoon; "there is going to be a dramatic entertainment at Staunton's Hall to-morrow night, and I do wish I could go! Lots of the girls are going; and Carrie Rivers said she should like to have me come in and go with them, if you and father don't go. O, how I wish I could!" And she looked at her mother eagerly.

A pained expression came in Mrs. Barton's fair, kind face, as she met Alice's look of childish longing; but she spoke in a cheerful tone, as she said:

"Well, Alice, I should have no objection to your going to the Hall with Carrie and her sisters and parents, but you know papa does not like to have you attend such places very well. Perhaps, though, he will feel differently about this," she added, as she saw the brightness fade from Alice's face at this reminder of the stern decisions of Mr. Barton. "We will hope for the best, but I should not want you to be *too* much disappointed if you cannot go."

"O mother!" again said Alice, her voice quivering, and ready to cry at the thought of her father's dreaded refusal; "how I wish papa was like Mr. Rivers about such things. He lets Carrie go once in a while, when anything *good* comes; but I always have to stay at home, and then hear the other girls tell how nice it was, the next day. And once, when Angie Bartlett asked me if I had gone the night before to some nice concert, and I told her 'No,' I heard one of the others say softly, behind my back, 'Of course *she* didn't go; her father is too stingy to pay her way in.' And O, how mortified I felt!"

Here Mrs. Barton closed Alice's mouth with a kiss, as she said:

"There, dear, don't talk any more about it; the girl was very rude, and you should not mind her foolish speeches. Your father means well, and doesn't think how much you want to go to these places. He thinks you are better off without such pleasures."

"But you don't, mother," returned the affectionate girl, as she wound her arms around Mrs. Barton's neck; "and it would

be a good deal harder if you didn't want me to go, either. But seems as if papa *might* say yes, just this once, and I wouldn't ask him again all winter. How happy I should be!" And the excitement-loving little thing clasped her hands together, while her eyes danced at the thought of the delight it would be to her to go to the Hall and see a real play performed, ever so poorly.

"Hope on, hope ever," smiled Mrs. Barton; "maybe papa *will* say yes; but if he doesn't, your day will come sometime, Alice. You are only a little girl now, and can afford to wait for all these nice things. I do not believe in dissipation any more than your father does, but I know it is only natural for you to wish to have a little change. I used to like it myself." And Mrs. Barton sighed unconsciously as she thought of her happy girlhood, when she had loved steady-going young Barton, and promised to be his true wife, believing him to be the embodiment of all manly virtues.

That promise had been faithfully kept, but at the expense of how much self-sacrifice few could imagine. Those who saw her moving about her daily duties, pleasant and serene, though more thoughtful than of old, said it was only natural that she should "sober down" a little as she grew older; and if the unchanging round of household cares seemed at times wearisome and monotonous, Mrs. Barton never said so. She grew accustomed to living in the narrow, parsimonious way dictated by her husband, and developed a wonderful capacity for making over old garments into new ones, and clothing herself and Alice with almost no expenditure, though there was not the least need of all this cutting and contriving, which left no room for the charity she would have been glad to exercise toward her poorer neighbors. Mr. Barton was quite a wealthy man, but he had early given over his soul to the worship of Mammon, and the love of money grew upon him more than he was aware. He found excuses for his niggardliness, one form of which was to deny Alice the enjoyment of all public entertainments demanding an admission fee. He argued to himself that

it would only be an injury to Alice, and a foolish waste of money, to allow her the privileges for which she longed all the more because they were refused to her. And yet Mr. Barton, in his boyhood, had been as fond of boyish pleasures as any of his companions. But he seemed to forget the desires of his youth, and did not guess how much unhappiness he caused his little daughter, unnecessarily, or how she often contrasted him with Mr. Rivers, her friend Carrie's father, greatly to her own parent's disadvantage; for Mr. Rivers did not grudge his children any innocent pleasure that came within his means.

Alice was always sure of her mother's sympathy, for, though Mrs. Barton taught her to love and respect her father, she could not help feeling the injustice of his course. For herself, she had long given up all thought of entering into those enjoyments once so congenial to her tastes, but it was doubly hard to see Alice's life darkened by the same grasping spirit that had so coldly forbidden all generosity on her part since her marriage.

On this evening of which I write, Mr. Barton came in to tea with his usual punctuality, and, equally as usual, Mrs. Barton awaited his coming at a neatly-arranged supper-table, while Alice, full of excitement at thought of the request she wished to make, kept changing her position uneasily in her nervousness. Mr. Barton, it so happened, was in unusual good humor, for he had been very successful in his business that day, and the bank notes in his pocket-book had greatly increased since morning. He took his seat at the table with a glance of satisfaction, and sipped the fragrant tea with extreme relish. He even talked more freely than usual, and Mrs. Barton began to think that possibly the time might prove favorable for the success of Alice's project. Presently, enjoying the comfort of his well-warmed slippers, and dressing-gown, and easy-chair, Mr. Barton prepared to read his favorite newspaper, entirely unconscious of the agitation of poor little Alice, who felt as much anxiety as many an older person would feel on a more important occasion. Several times she attempted to speak, but her courage failed her. At length, strengthened by an encouraging glance from her mother, who thought it best that Alice should plead her own cause, she managed to stammer out:

"Papa, may I ask you about something?"

Mr. Barton lowered his newspaper, and looked inquiringly at the little girl as he said:

"Well, Alice, what is it?"

"Please, papa, there is going to be a dramatic entertainment at Staunton's Hall to-morrow night, and Carrie Rivers and all the rest are going. Would you please to let me go, too?"

Alice's voice took on a very pleading tone as she asked her question, but Mr. Barton did not seem to notice it. His brow contracted, and he asked, harshly:

"What is the admission?"

"Fifty cents for reserved seats," timidly replied Alice.

"Fifty cents! Fifty cents for perfect nonsense! How many times have I told you, Alice, that I do not approve of such performances? Your mother," with a wrathful glance at Mrs. Barton, "should have taught you better than to wish to waste money in such a ridiculous way. Mr. Rivers will yet be sorry for his extravagance, and it is my duty to set a better example to my neighbors. Be thankful that you have a good home to spend your evenings in, and remember that you must not annoy me any more by such foolish requests;" saying which, Mr. Barton subsided behind his journal with an air of self-satisfaction.

Alice turned away with quivering lips and flooded eyes, and going out of the room, ran up to her own little chamber, where she threw herself upon the bed in a passion of tears and sobs. She had not known how strong her hope was that her father would say "Yes," until he answered her "No."

Mrs. Barton soon made an errand to leave the room, and went to Alice, suspecting how she should find her, and grieving in her motherly heart over the child's disappointment. Throwing her arms around the little figure, she whispered words of love and comfort, till Alice became more calm. At length she said:

"Had you not better go back to the sitting-room, Alice, dear, where it is warmer and pleasanter than it is here? I will help you about your lessons for to-morrow, if you wish, and will tell papa what a good girl you have been to be so attentive to your studies. Mr. Parkman, whom I saw last evening at Mrs. Baker's, complimented

you very highly, for he said you were a scholar of whom he felt proud, and that he had no fault to find with either your deportment or recitations."

Now Alice held her teacher in the highest estimation, and a word of praise from him was very precious. Mrs. Barton was not mistaken in the thought that she would be cheered by his kind commendation, and was glad to see a faint smile curve her lips, as she asked:

"Did he really say that, mother? How good he is! He is the best teacher in the world! But," she added, mournfully, "I don't believe papa will care anything about it; I don't believe he does care whether I am happy or not!"

"Never say that, Alice," returned her mother; "your father loves you very dearly, but he doesn't see things as you do. Be patient, little girl, and do your best, and perhaps he will think differently sometime. I must go down now, and shall look for you to come very soon."

So Alice brushed her hair, and bathed her eyes, and returned to the sitting-room.

Mr. Barton still remained by the fire, seemingly deeply interested in his newspaper; but his thoughts were not so agreeable as they had been before Alice made her request, and he found it hard to fix his mind on what he was reading. In spite of himself, he could not help recalling her pleading look and voice, and feeling a slight twinge of regret. But he would not indulge in such reflections, and comforted himself by the assurance that Alice would be all the better off for staying at home. When he saw her reenter the room quietly, and take up her books for an evening's study, the traces of grief on her face affected him unpleasantly.

The evening wore on, the lessons were committed, and Alice, with her usual "Good-night, papa and mamma," went up stairs to bed.

There was silence for a few minutes, broken by Mrs. Barton's soft voice, saying:

"I heard something about Alice last evening, Phillip, that pleased me very much. I went in to see Mrs. Baker of a few moments, and Mr. Parkman came in and spoke of his school. He said that, all things considered, Alice is the best scholar he has, and that her attention to her studies, and behaviour every way, deserve the highest praise her teacher can give."

Mr. Barton listened with pleased attention, for he was very proud of his daughter, in his own way, and then said:

"That is very well indeed, and convinces me more than ever that I am right in my determination not to allow Alice to go to these outside fooleries. If she did not stay quietly at home and study her lessons in the evening, she would not be so far in advance of the others."

"Very true, in the main, Phillip; but I am sorry that you take just such a view of the matter," said Mrs. Barton, gently. "You know that I do not approve of too much extra excitement; but I do not think Alice would be any the worse for a little change now and then. You know we used to like amusements when we were young, and Alice is not different from other children in that respect. Could you not make an exception to your rule, and let her go with the Rivers family to-morrow night? I am sure that Mr. Rivers would never patronize anything low or vulgar, for he and Mrs. Rivers are very particular with their children. Alice deserves a little reward for her good conduct."

The surprise on Mr. Barton's face changed to something like anger, as he comprehended the drift of his wife's argument. It was not often that she opposed him as much as this.

"I am astonished at you!" he exclaimed. "But you reason just like a woman. As if I want Alice to behave well for the sake of reward! You ought to bring her up to do right, without any such selfish motive. If she is a good girl, that is all very well. She ought to be. But I want you to understand, once for all, that I don't *choose* to spend my money for any such foolishness as they will have at the Hall to-morrow night. I don't take Rivers for *my* example; he will come to want one of these days, if he isn't more careful about his expenditures. He bought his wife one of those expensive shawls at White's to-day. He'd better have put the money in the bank or in his business."

Mrs. Barton thought of her own rather shabby and worn shawl, which, in spite of her careful keeping, began to show its age, and did not agree with her husband. But she well knew that any opposition only made him more decided, and so replied:

"Of course you will do what you think right, Phillip."

"Yes, you may be sure I shall," returned Mr. Barton, in an imperative tone. "And fortunate it is for you that you have a husband who takes care of the pennies, for if I didn't I should never get many dollars. I made a hundred dollars, clear gain, to-day, and as I've no use for it, I'm going to add it to my bank account to-morrow."

"I wish," said Mrs. Barton, presently, "that Alice could have a set of furs like those Carrie Rivers wore last Sunday. They would make her old suit look nicely, and they are not very expensive."

"There!" exclaimed her husband, testily. "That is always the way! The moment I tell you that I have made any money, you begin to tease me to spend it. Henceforth I'll keep my business to myself!"

Silence followed this outburst, and soon Mrs. Barton stole up to Alice's room, to find her fast asleep, forgetful of all her troubles.

"Dear child!" murmured the mother, as she turned away; "I am sorry she had to be disappointed."

Somehow, Mr. Barton could not go to sleep very early that night, and when he did sleep his dreams were not pleasant. Among others, he dreamed that Alice was being carried away from him in the arms of a stranger, and that her last words, as she disappeared, were, "Good-by, papa; I'm going to the dramatic entertainment." And it was in vain that he tried to reach her, for his limbs refused to carry him. He rose unrefreshed, and went to his business the next morning in a dissatisfied frame of mind. On the way he was overtaken by Mr. Rivers, who spoke to him pleasantly, and catching sight of the bills announcing the evening's play, he said:

"Our little folks are in high glee in anticipation of to-night. I have promised them that they shall all go to the Hall. By the way, I believe Carrie said she expected your little girl in to go with us; or are you all going together?"

"No, Mr. Rivers; we are not any of us going. I do not think it good for Alice to attend such places."

"Ah! well, we all have our ideas on these subjects," rejoined Mr. Rivers. "For my part, I never could see that it did the children any harm to go once in a while, and the pleasure of it lasts them a long time. Such entertainments do not come very often, you know, in a country town like ours. And really, I like to go myself."

Just then the two came to a dry-goods store, and Mr. Rivers pointed to a shawl there displayed, as he added:

"There's the mate to the shawl I bought for my wife yesterday. And you ought to have seen her when I carried it home! The way her face lighted up was worth more than the price of the shawl, and I told her so. I tell you, Barton, it makes one feel young again to do a generous thing once in a while, and when a man has a good wife, he ought to do all he can to please her."

"O yes! Yes! No doubt! No doubt!" hastily responded Mr. Barton, somewhat embarrassed by this style of reasoning, and noticing almost enviously the look of happiness beaming from Mr. Rivers's face. "How much did you say the shawl cost?"

"Fifty dollars, and cheap at that."

Just then a gentleman came up and addressed Mr. Rivers, and Mr. Barton walked on. "Fifty dollars is a good deal of money to spend for a shawl," he reflected. "I couldn't afford it, though I suppose I am as well off as Rivers is. Yes, Ellen is a good wife." And he thought of the beautiful slippers, the work of her own fingers, with which Mrs. Barton had lately presented him, and of the warm dressing-gown that she had made so tastefully for him. But his trials were not yet ended. Attracted by the sight of some unique design in silver newly displayed in a jeweller's window, he stopped to examine it more closely. It so happened that a group of school-children had collected to read the particulars of the evening's entertainment as announced on a flaming poster near by, and their clear voices reached Mr. Barton's ear.

"I am going to-night," said one girl; "my father says it is a very good *troupe*, and we are all going."

"So am I"—"and I"—"and I," were the responses from several others.

"Well, girls," said a member of the group, "I tell you of *one* scholar that wont go—and that is Alice Barton. Her father never lets her go anywhere, and folks say he is so mean he don't want to spend the money. She'll be looking solemn all day—see if she don't!"

"My mother says," rejoined another, "that Mrs. Barton is a beautiful woman, and Alice is just like her, but Mr. Barton is a real old skinflint. I'm sure I don't see how Alice can love him, if he is so stingy

with her. She always looks nice, but mother says it is because Mrs. Barton cuts and contrives, and always makes the very best of everything."

"Alice is a splendid girl," added a third, as they walked away. "I like her ever so much, and I'm sure I wish she could go and enjoy herself, like the rest of us, to-night."

Mr. Barton's face was turned away, and not one of the schoolgirls had recognized him, or even dreamed that he could have overheard them making their comments on his character. He turned and walked toward his store with a flush on his cheeks, and a strange feeling like remorse or shame at his heart. Could it be that he, who so prided himself on his immaculate character, was held in such low estimation by his friends and neighbors?

Mr. Barton, though he had allowed the love of money to usurp too large a place in his heart, was really a man of strong affections, and the thought that his only child might not love him with her whole heart hurt him deeply now that it had been suggested to him. Then, too, his pride was touched at hearing the appearance of his wife and daughter criticized, though he would have refused to listen to any such ideas if they had been presented in any other way. Altogether, his peace of mind was utterly destroyed, and the thought that he had a hundred dollars to add to his bank account that morning ceased to give him pleasure. By noon he had arrived at several conclusions, and though the bitter pills he had been forced to swallow in the morning still disturbed him, he was progressing toward a happier state of mind. When he went home to dinner he noticed, with his newly-opened eyes, the absence of gayety in Alice's manner, and chuckled to himself as he thought how he would change all that.

"Alice," said he, as the three still sat at the table, "do you really want to go to the Hall this evening?"

A bright flush rose to Alice's cheeks, as she looked up in surprise at the kindly tone of the question.

"O yes, indeed, I should like to go, papa," she replied, "but—"

"Well," said Mr. Barton, "I have been thinking it over, and have concluded that I have no objection." (Alice could scarcely believe that she heard aright.) "And," turning to Mrs. Barton, "suppose you and I should go too, Ellen? We have not been

anywhere for a long time, and perhaps you would like it."

"Wonders on wonders!" thought Mrs. Barton; but she only said, with brightening eyes, "Thank you, Philip; it would be a very great treat to go with you—quite like our youthful days—you are very kind to propose it."

"O papa!" cried Alice, running around to her father and kissing him delightedly; "how good you are!"

And Mr. Barton, with a glow at his heart that was quite new and very pleasant, went back to his business, more decided than ever about his line of conduct.

"By George!" he said to himself; "I believe Rivers was about right, and I have been an old fool!"

The hundred dollars yet remained in Mr. Barton's pocket, and on his way home to tea with tickets for the play in his pocket, he went into a fur store and selected a nice pretty set of furs for Alice—cap, boa and muff. Then he paid a visit to the same dry-goods establishment where he and Mr. Rivers had observed the *fac-simile* of Mrs. Rivers's shawl in the morning, and soon issued thence with quite a large bundle under his arm. Thus armed and equipped, he entered his own home, where Alice awaited him in a glow of pleasant excitement, which was shared in a lesser degree by her mother.

"There," said Mr. Barton, as he displayed his purchases, "I am not going to the Hall with you, unless you make a good appearance. Here, Alice, are your furs; and here, Mrs. Barton, is your shawl." And he threw a handsome cashmere long-shawl over his wife's shoulders.

This was too much for Mrs. Barton's composure, and her eyes filled with happy tears at such unexpected and uncommon kindness from her husband, while Alice's gratitude was unbounded. Mr. Barton was well satisfied with the success of his experiment, and was more firmly convinced than ever that Mr. Rivers's theory was correct.

That was a happy evening for the Barton family, and especially to Alice, who had everything that her child's heart craved. Mr. Barton, in after years, often tried the same experiment, and never found it fail in bringing happiness to the whole household; nor did Alice's lessons suffer any for her attendance at the "dramatic entertainment."